A COMPILATION OF THE LIVES OF THE AWLIYA OF ALLAH

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About the Book

This book was made as a form of easy retrieval for whoever wishes to read the biographies of the Awliya from sufiwiki.com.

What Happened to Sufiwiki.com?

Sufiwiki.com was a website that compiled the biographies of the Awliya of Allah. Some original biographies were left out from this book because:

The biography wasn't available (only one – Abu al-Hasan al-Shadhili).

I was not sure of some of them.

Some were left out because people were mentioned in them I was not sure about.

Some were left out because they were Barelvis (followers of Ahmed Raza Khan Barelvi).

The website ran until 2024, when its domain expired from their provider Porkbun (names are ironic). After a few months, the domain was bought and the website was changed from one with priceless info to the average celebrity news website, maintaining the Sufiwiki name…

Although the website is on the Internet Archive, it is very troublesome to go to the different dates to see when certain

biographies are available to read, so I made this book to be easier to read them.

Hazrat Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani

Order: Qadiri (Founder)

Madhab: Hanbali

Born: 1077 AD / 470 AH Jilan, Iran

Passed away: 1166 AD / 561 AH Baghdad, Iraq

Resting place: Baghdad, Iraq

Hazrat Abu Muhammad Muhyi al-Din Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) was a Sufi Sheikh and the founder of the Qadiri Sufi order (Silsila). He was born in the month of Ramadan in 470 AH (1077-78 AD) in the Persian province of Jilan (Iran), south of the

Caspian Sea. His contribution to Sufism and Sharia was so immense that he became known as the spiritual pole of his time, Ghaus e Azam.

PREDICTIONS OF HIS BIRTH

Sheikh-ul-Mashaa'ikh, Sayyiduna Junaid al-Baghdadi (ra)

He lived two hundred years before Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) and foretold his coming in the following manner. Once, while Sheikh Junaid al-Baghdadi (ra) was in a state of spiritual ecstasy, he stated: "His foot is on my shoulders; his foot is on my shoulders." After he had come out of this spiritual condition, his disciples questioned him concerning these words. He said, "I have been informed that a great Saint will be born towards the end of the fifth century. His name shall be Abdul Qadir and his title will be Muhiyuddin. He will be born in Jilan and he will reside in Baghdad. One day, on the Command of Allah, he will say, 'My foot is on the shoulders of all the Awliya Allah'. While in my spiritual condition, I saw his excellence and these words were uttered by me without my control."

Hasan al-Askari (ra)

Sheikh Abu Muhammad (ra) states that before his demise, Hasan al-Askari (ra) handed over his Jubba (Cloak) to Sayyiduna Ma'ruf al-Karkhi (ra) and asked him to pass it over to Sheikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (ra). Ma'ruf al-Karkhi (ra) passed over this cloak to Sayyiduna Junaid al-Baghdadi (ra), who in turn passed it over to

Sheikh Danuri (ra) . From here it was then passed down until it reached Sheikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (ra) in the year 497 A.H.

Sheikh Abu Bakr Bin Hawwaar (ra)

He lived before the time of Ghaus e Azam (ra) and was amongst the distinguished Mashaa'ikh of Baghdad. Once, while he was sitting in his Majlis, he said, "There are seven Aqtaab (High-Ranking Awliya) of Iraq:

1. Sheikh Ma'ruf al-Karkhi (ra)
2. Sheikh Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (ra)
3. Sheikh Bishr al-Hafi (ra)
4. Sheikh Mansur bin Ammar (ra)
5. Sayyiduna Junaid al-Baghdadi (ra)
6. Sheikh Sahl bin Abdullah al-Tustari (ra)
7. Sheikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (ra)

When he heard this, Abu Muhammad (ra), who was a mureed of Sheikh Abu Bakr (ra) asked, "We have heard and know six of these names, but the seventh, we have not heard of. O Sheikh! Who is Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani?" Sheikh Abu Bakr (ra) replied by saying: "Abd al-Qadir (ra) will be a non-Arab (and a) pious man. He will be born towards the end of the fifth century Hijri and he will reside in Baghdad."

Sheikh Khaleel Balkhi (ra)

He was a great Wali of Allah and had passed away before the time of Sheikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (ra). Once while he was seated with his disciples, he said: "A pure servant of Allah will become apparent in Iraq towards the end of the fifth century. The world will gain brightness from his presence. He will be the Ghaus of his time. The creation of Allah will be obedient to him, and he will be the Leader of the Awliya Allah."

Imam Muhammad Bin Sa'id Zanjani (ra)

He stated as follows in his distinguished work, "Nuzhatul Khawatir": "From the era of Sheikh Abi Ali Hassan Yasaarajuwi (ra) up to the era of Sheikh Abd al-Qadir Jilani (ra), every Wali that passed this earth, foretold the coming and the excellence of Sheikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (ra)."

BIRTH

According to authentic narrations, Sheikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (ra) was born in a place called Neef, which is situated in Jilan (Persia). According to Imam Yaaqoot Hamwi (ra), Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) was born in a place called Bashteer. Most historians agree that Neef and Bashteer were different names for the same place. Since he was born in Jilan, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) is known as al-Jilani. Concerning his birth, he personally states the following in his "Qasida-e-Ghausia": "I am

al-Jilani, my name is Muhiyuddin, and my banners fly on mountain tops."

There are two narrations concerning the date of birth of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra). The first narration is that he was born on the 1st of Ramadan 470 AH. The second narration is that he was born on the eve of the 2nd of Ramadan 470 AH. The second narration seems to be the one more favoured amongst the scholars. His birth was a great blessing for the Ummah. It was the arrival of the Sultan al-Awliya (King of the Saints), which had been foretold for centuries before his birth.

EARLY LIFE

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) was not like other children who spent their time in play and amusement. From a tender age he spent his time in the remembrance of Almighty Allah. If he at any time ever intended to join the other children, then a Voice from the Unseen would be heard to say, "Come towards Me, O blessed one." At first, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) would become afraid when he heard this voice. He would go to his mother and sit on her lap. As time passed, he became accustomed to this voice. Instead of going to his mother, he would abandon the thought of playing and occupy himself in the remembrance of Almighty Allah.

- Passing on of Sheikh Abu Saleh Moosa (ra)

After the passing on of his father, his grandfather, Sheikh Abdullah Sauma'ee (ra) took care of him. It was his grandfather

that was responsible for the marriage of the parents of the great Saint. He moulded Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) from childhood into the personality that he was to be. He blessed Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) with gems of spiritualism. He nurtured him with gentleness and showered him with words of wisdom.

- **Commencement of Academic Studies**

When Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) was four and a half years old, and according to certain narrations, five years old, his mother enrolled him into a local Madrassa in Jilan. He studied at this Madrassa until the age of ten. During this period, a certain amazing event occurred. Whenever Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) would enter the Madrassa he would see bright figures walking ahead of him saying, "Give way to the Friend of Allah." His son, Abdur Razzaq (ra), reports that once Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) was asked when he first came to know of his Wilayah the great Ghaus (ra) replied: "When I was ten years old, I found Angels walking beside me on my way to the Madrassa. When we reached the Madrassa I would hear them say, 'Give way to the Wali Allah, Give way to the Wali Allah.' It was when this continued that I knew that I had been blessed with Wilayah".

- **Passing on of Sheikh Abdullah Sauma'ee (ra)**

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) was still a student at the Madrassa in Baghdad when his grandfather, Sheikh Abdullah Sauma'ee (ra) passed away. After the demise of his grandfather, the responsibility for his education fell upon his mother. She fulfilled this responsibility with great patience, sincerity and dedication.

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) was about 18 years old when this incident took place.

- **Extraordinary Incident**

One day, he left his home for a walk. As he walked along the streets of Jilan he saw an ox in front of him. He walked behind it for some time. The ox then turned around and spoke to him in the language of humans. It said: "You have not been created for this and you have not been commanded to do this." He immediately returned home and explained this incident to his mother. He requested permission from his mother to journey to Baghdad in order to complete his academic studies and seek more spiritual knowledge. His mother, who was now 78 years old, acceded to this noble request without a second thought.

- **Mother's Advice**

It was such a time where parents in their old age usually depend on their children for moral and financial support, but this pious and pure servant of Allah only wanted the pleasure of Almighty Allah and His Rasool ﷺ. Whilst she was very attached to Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra), she did not let her personal feelings come before the pleasure of Allah. She wanted her son to be a man of knowledge and wisdom. In those days, people used to travel either by foot or by camel or another animal. The roads passed through dense forests and jungles and there was always the danger of travelers being robbed and killed by bandits. Sayyida Ummul Khair Fatima (ra) knew of the dangers but still supported

her son's. She wished him well with her Du'as. She said: "O my dear son! I have now become very old and I do not think I will ever get to see you again, but my Du'as will always be with you. May Almighty Allah grant you success in your quest for academic and spiritual knowledge."

She then said: "Your deceased father left eighty Dinars from which I am giving you forty Dinars for your journey and forty Dinars I will keep for your younger brother, Sayyid Abu Ahmad Abdullah." She took the forty Dinars and sewed them under the arm of his coat. She once again made Du'a for him. On bidding him farewell, she gave him the following advice: "O' my beloved son! Let this advice, which I am about to give you be an important part of your life. Always speak the truth! Do not even think of lies." The young Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) said, "My dear mother! I promise from my heart that I will always act upon your advice." Sayyida Fatima (ra) then embraced the apple of her eye with love and motherly gentleness for the last time, and with the words, "Go! May Allah be with you. It is He who is your Helper and Protector". The journey to Baghdad began.

ARRIVAL IN BAGHDAD & EDUCATION

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra), arrived in Baghdad during the reign of the Abbasid Caliphate in 488 AH (1095 AD) at a time where there was chaos and disunity in the Islamic world. The Muslim rulers had lost all sense of duty and paid no heed to Islamic teachings.

When he arrived in Baghdad, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) already spent the forty Dirhams given to him by his mother. Without any money, he began to spend his days in hunger and poverty. Due to immense poverty, he went towards the Arcade of Chosroes in search of Halal food. When he reached the Arcade, he found that there were already seventy Awliya Allah in search of Halal food. Since he did not wish to be in their way, he returned to Baghdad.

On his way back, he met a traveler from Jilan. When he heard that Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) was from Jilan, he asked him if he knew a young man by the name of "Abdul Qadir". Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) informed him that he was Abdul Qadir. The traveler then handed a block of gold to Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) saying that it had been sent to him by his mother. When Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) heard this, he immediately made the Shukr of Almighty Allah. He then returned to the Arcade of Chosroes where he presented most of the gold to the Awliya Allah who were in search of food. He then took a little for himself and returned to Baghdad.

On his return to Baghdad, he prepared meals and fed the poor and then shared this meal with them. This alone shows the character of the great Ghaus that even though he was without food, he first gave most of his gold to the Awliya Allah, then fed the poor before eating the food himself. Without doubt, this is the sign of a true servant of Allah.

It was in this manner that the life of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) commenced in the holy city of Baghdad.

- **Attaining Academic Knowledge**

In Baghdad, he took admission in Madrassa Nizamiya, which was the most prestigious and world-renowned educational institution of its time. Under the tutelage of some of the best teachers in the Islamic word, he reached an outstanding level of understanding in the following sciences:

1. Fiqah (Jurisprudence)
2. Tafsir (Commentary of the Holy Qur'an)
3. Sunnah of the Holy Prophet
4. Hadith (Traditions of the Holy Prophet(saw))
5. Arab Literature

He studied the Hanabli Fiqah in particular under prominent Hanabli jurist Hazrat Abu Saeed al-Mukharrami (referred to as Al-Makhzumi or Al-Makhrimi in some texts). He was taught Tafsir, Sunnah and Hadith by Hazrat Abu Ghalib Ahmad and Hazrat Abu al-Qasim Ali. He also studied and Arab Literature under Hazrat Abu Zakariya Yahya Tabrizi – the principal of Madrassa Nizamiya.

HARDSHIPS FACED DURING STUDIES

While studying in Baghdad, he faced many hardships and was tested severely by the life of Baghdad. Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) himself used to say: "The hardship and difficulties that I

faced in Baghdad during my studies were so severe that if they had to be placed on a mountain, then even the mountain would split in two."

He also used to say: "When the hardships and difficulties would become unbearable, then I would lie on the road and continuously recite the Ayah of the Holy Quran:

Shakir: *Surely with difficulty is ease. With difficulty is surely ease.*

Qur'an 94:5-6

By making Takrar (repetition) of this Ayah I used to find great tranquility and peace."

After adjourning from classes, he used to wander into the jungles and forests of Baghdad where he used to spend the entire night in the Zikr of Almighty Allah. He did this regardless of the weather conditions or season. If he became tired and weak, he would rest for a while making the ground his bed and a boulder his pillow. During these nights of Zikr, he would dress in a small turban and a thin cloak. If he became hungry, he used to go towards the river Euphrates and eat whatever vegetables he could find beside the river. He always said that he gained much pleasure in this way of life and it caused him to gain closeness to Almighty Allah.

- Patience During a Severe Drought

Once, while he was studying, the city of Baghdad experienced a severe drought. The conditions in Baghdad became so desperate

that people became dependent on every grain that they could find. When there was no more grain, people began to eat plants and leaves from trees. During this time, al-Ghawth al-A'zam (ra) used to also go out in search for food. But when he saw others in search of food, he would return to the city empty-handed, as he did not feel it appropriate to impose by disturbing others whom he thought needed food more than he did. Many days had passed by without him eating.

Due to intense hunger, he was compelled to go out in search of food towards a market in Baghdad known as Sooqur Raihaanain. As he entered the market, his hunger had made him so weak and tired, that he could not stand anymore. He saw a Masjid nearby and slowly dragged himself towards it. He entered the Masjid and sat against one of the walls of the Masjid to support his tired and weak body. He sat there for a while. Then he saw a person enter the Masjid. The person sat in one corner and opened a parcel which contained fried meat and bread. Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) reported this incident that the person then began to have this meal. Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) says: "The intensity of my hunger was so great that every time the person lifted a morsel of food to his mouth, my mouth would uncontrollably open with his and I wished that I also had something to eat."

When this continued happening, al-Ghawth al-A'zam (ra) turned to his Nafs and said, "Do not be impatient. Have trust and faith in Almighty Allah." After uttering these words he did not feel this way anymore. After a little while, this person came to Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) uninvited and offered him some food. Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) kindly declined, but the person

insisted. Upon such insistence, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) joined him in his meal.

Whilst eating, the person asked al-Ghawth al-A'zam (ra) about himself. He explained to him that he was from Jilan and that he was in Baghdad to attain knowledge. The person then said that he was also from Jilan and asked if he knew any person named Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra). Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) answered by saying, "My name is Abdul Qadir Jilani."

When the man heard this, with tears in his eyes, he stood before Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) and said, "Please forgive me for I have misused that which was given to me in trust." Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) asked the stranger to explain what he meant. The stranger then said:

"When I was leaving Jilan, I met an old woman, who gave me eight Dirhams in trust that I should give them to her son, Abdul Qadir, who is studying in Baghdad. O Abdul Qadir! The food that I was eating was from the eight Dirhams that your mother had given for you. I had been searching for you but could not find you and due to this, my stay in Baghdad was extended. This caused my money to run out and out of extreme hunger, I used some of your money to purchase this food that we ate. O Abdul Qadir! It is not I that fed you, but it is you that fed me. Please forgive me for abusing that which was given to me in trust (Amaanah)."

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra), with great gentleness and affection, held the stranger to his heart and praised him for his honesty and his sincerity. He then gave the remainder of the food

and a portion of the eight Dirhams to the stranger and bid him farewell.

This incident indicates in clear terms that Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) was concerned more with the needs of others than those of his own. Notwithstanding his dire need in the circumstances, he remained sensitive to the plight of this stranger. This act of selflessness alone is a lesson in the behaviour that one should adopt.

- A Lion of Allah

Sheikh Abdullah Salmi (ra) states that he heard the following astonishing incident from Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) The Great Ghawth said:

"Once during my studies in Baghdad, I had nothing to eat for many days. One day, in this condition, I was on my way to a small street called 'Qat'eeya Sharfiya'. Here, there was a Masjid, which used to be empty. I used to sit there by myself and revise my lessons for the next day. On my way to Mohalla Qat'eeya, I met a stranger who gave me a piece of paper and asked me to take it to a certain shop. Very surprised, I did as he asked. When I got to the shop, I gave the piece of paper to the owner, who in turn kept this piece of paper and gave me roti (bread) and halwa (sweets). I took this roti and halwa and went into the Masjid where I used to revise my lessons. I sat down for a while and decided to eat a piece of bread and some halwa when I saw a piece of paper beside the wall. I picked it up and saw the

following words written on it, 'Almighty Allah has stated in one of the past Books, that the Lions of Allah have no desire for the pleasures of this world. Desires and pleasure (in food) are for the old and weak who depend on this to gain strength for Ibadah. When I read this my entire body began to tremble in the fear of Allah causing all the hair on my body to stand on end. I immediately removed the desire of eating from my mind and read two Rakahs of Salaah and then left the Masjid without eating."

- Encounter with a Pious Servant of Allah

It was a common practice during harvesting season in Baghdad Shareef for students to get together at a nearby village called "Baaqooba" and to ask the farmers for some grain from their annual harvest. In those days, the people showed great respect to students and happily gave them grain.

On one occasion, the students, who were in the class of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra), insisted that he accompany them to the village of Baaqooba. Since he did not want to disappoint them, he accompanied them to the village. When they reached there, Al-Ghawth al-A'zam (ra) heard that a pious servant of Allah, by the name of Shareef Baaqoobi lived in this village. Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) decided to meet this pious servant to obtain his blessings. When Shareef Baaqoobi saw Al-Ghawth al-A'zam (ra) Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra), he immediately recognized that this was the Qutb-e-Zaman. He told him:

"O my son! Those who strive in the path of Allah do not sketch their hands out to anyone but Allah. You seem to be amongst the chosen servants of Allah. For you to ask for grain (from the people of Baaqooba) is contrary to your status."

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) states: "From that day onwards, I never accompanied anyone on such trips and I never asked anything from anyone again."

- Assistance from the Unseen

One day, the Great Ghawth (ra) was studying in the jungle when he heard a voice from the Unseen call to him: "O Abdul Qadir! You have not eaten in days and most of your time is being spent in studies. Go to someone and get something on credit. It is the Sunnah of the Ambiya."

When Al-Ghawth al-A'zam (ra) heard this, he replied that he could not take anything on credit, as he had no means of repaying this credit. The voice answered: Do not worry about this. Repaying your credit is Our responsibility."

After receiving this message, he went to a shop and requested the shopkeeper for some food on credit. He said: "I would like for you to give me one and a half rotis (slices of bread) daily on credit, which I will repay when I have the means, and if I die before this, then you should pardon my credit."

The shopkeeper, being a pious servant of Allah, began to cry when he heard these words of Al-Ghawth al-A'zam (ra) He replied: "Take anything that you wish to take from my shop and whenever you wish to do so." From that day onwards, he used to take one and a half rotis (bread) daily. The days passed by rapidly and Al-Ghawth al-A'zam (ra) began to worry about the money that he owed. One day, he was engrossed in this thought when the same Voice from the Unseen called to him and said: "O Abdul Qadir! Go to a certain place and whatever you find there, give it to the shopkeeper".

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) went to that spot that he was commanded to go to. There, he found a piece of gold. He took this piece of gold and gave it to the shopkeeper thus paying off his credit.

SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

After completing his academic studies, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) did not stop in his quest for in-depth spiritual knowledge. To quench this spiritual thirst, he was presented with the opportunity of gaining spiritual knowledge under the guidance of Sheikh Hammad bin Muslim Ad Dabbaas (ra) who was amongst the greatest Sheikhs of Baghdad.

There came a time in Baghdad when there was abundance of trouble. Since he did not want any part of this, he decided to leave Baghdad for a more peaceful environment. Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) said:

"I made my intention to leave Baghdad due to the unsuitable conditions and was on my way out of Baghdad, when from the unseen, some great strength pushed me so hard that I fell to the ground. Then from the unseen I heard a voice say, 'Do not leave here. The creation of Allah will gain benefit via you.' On hearing this I said, 'What do I have to do with the people? All I want is to protect my Deen (Imaan).' The voice then said, 'No, it is of utmost importance for you to remain here. No harm will come to your Imaan.

I then immediately changed my mind and for the pleasure of Allah, I remained in Baghdad. The very next day as I was passing through a street, a man opened the door of his house and called to me. He said, 'O Abdul Qadir, what did you ask from your Creator yesterday?' With these words, he closed the door of his house. I walked for some time and then realised that I had made a grave error, this person was a Wali, if not, he would have not known of what had happened the previous day. I went in search of his door, but was unsuccessful. After this, I would look for him wherever I went, until one day I saw him in a gathering and from then on I stayed in his company. This personality was Sayyid Hammad bin Muslim Ad Dabbaas."

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) gained deep spiritual knowledge from Sheikh Hammad (ra), who was originally from Syria. He was born in a village near Damascus. He travelled to Baghdad and lived in a place called Muzaffariyyab until his demise in 525 AH. His Mazaar is in the Shawneezia Cemetery in Baghdad Shareef.

Apart from Hammad (ra), al-Ghawth al-A'zam (ra) also gained spiritual education from Sheikh Abu Saeed Al-Mukharrami (ra).

By the year 496 AH, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) had completed his academic and spiritual studies. Between 496 AH and 521 AH, he underwent a period of deep reflection and seclusion during which he distanced himself from all worldly affairs. His twenty-five year long spiritual journey saw him travel across the barren desert and ruins in the area around Baghdad living in complete seclusion where he would experience extreme physical hardships. During this time, he would be in constant remembrance of Almighty Allah.

During these 25 years, he engrossed himself in such intense spiritual exercises that just by reading about them one can only but marvel at the dedication of this Great Saint. His sincerity and dedication in controlling his Nafs took him swiftly to the levels of "Fana-fi Rasool" and "Fana Fi Allah". He was now totally drowned in the sea of love of Allah and His Rasool (ﷺ). He turned himself into a strong mountain of patience and firmness that could not be moved. The notable events that took place during this part of his life are numerous. If they are recorded, then this alone would fill volumes. To give us some appreciation of his spiritual condition during these 25 years, a few incidents are quoted.

SUPPRESSING HIS NAFS

Once while delivering a lecture, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) said,

"For 25 years, I roamed the jungles of Iraq. For 40 years, I performed my Fajr Salaah with the Wudhu of Esha and for 15 years I used to stand on one foot until Fajr and complete (recitation of) the entire Quran. During this time, I sometimes spent between three and 40 days without eating even a morsel."

Sheikh Abul Mas'ood bin Abu Bakr Hareemi reports that Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) once said to him,

"Year after year, I spent struggling with my nafs by putting myself through various strenuous and intense tests. For one year, I ate only vegetables and drank no water. The following year I only drank water and ate nothing and the year after that, I did not eat and drink for the entire year. There were times when I did not sleep a wink. During this time I used to put myself through various spiritual exercises.

There were times when I would be so drowned in struggling against my nafs that I used to roll on thorns until my entire body would be severely bruised and cut and I would become unconscious. People would pick me up and take me to the physician. He would certify me dead. Thinking that I was dead, they would prepare for my ghusal and kaffan. When they used to place me on the bathing board to give me ghusl, I used to awake from this spiritual condition and walk away."

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) states regarding his experiences:

"During the early stages of my Mujahida I used to, on many occasions, be unaware of my own condition. I never used to even know where I was and how I got there. Once, in a village close to Baghdad, I entered into such a spiritual condition, which caused me to be totally unaware of my physical self. In this condition, I began to run. When I regained my normal senses, then only did I realize that I had been running for 12 days without stopping. I was amazed at what had happened to me. Then a woman passed by me and said, "You are Sheikh Abdul Qadir. You should not be astonished when something like this happens to you."

MEETING WITH HAZRAT KHIDR (AS)

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) states that when he had just commenced his spiritual exercises in the jungles of Baghdad, he met a person who was very handsome and had a pious and bright face. The person asked him if he would like to stay with him. Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) said that he would. The person then said that this could only be done if Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) promised to be obedient to his commands, and to never question his sayings or actions. Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) immediately agreed to this.

This person then commanded Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) to sit at a prescribed spot and not to move until he returned. The person left and only returned after one year to find Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) still seated at the prescribed spot. He spent a few moments with him and then asked him to sit there and wait for

him to return once more. This person left and returned after another year. He once again spent some time with the great Saint and then left again giving him the same command as he had done twice before. He returned after another year, this time bringing with him milk and roti (bread). He then said, "I am Hazrat Khidr (as) and I have been asked to share this meal with you." They sat together and ate this blessed meal. Hazrat Khidr (Alaihis Salaam) then asked, "O Abdul Qadir! What did you eat for the three years while sitting in one spot?" He replied, "Whatever the people had thrown away."

HAJJ

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) performed his first Hajj in the prime of his youth. It is recorded that al-Ghawth al-A'zam (ra) stated:

"I performed my first Hajj in the prime of my youth. On my journey for Hajj, I came to the 'Tower of Quroon', where I met Sheikh Adi bin Musaafir (ra). He was also very young during this time. He asked me if he could accompany me on my journey. I happily agreed. Thus, we both began to travel together.

After some time, I saw an Abyssinian woman in a veil standing in front of me and looking at me very attentively. She then asked my name and origin. I replied by giving her my name and old her that I was from Jilan. She then said, 'O Young man! You have made me tired searching for you. I was in Abyssinia when I was spiritually informed that Almighty Allah has filled your heart with His Noor (Light) and has blessed you with such excellence

that no other Wali Allah has ever received. After I was informed of this, I left in search of you. Now that I have seen you, my heart desires that I should travel with you today and make Iftaar with you. When evening came, I saw that a tray descended from the skies. On this tray were six rotis, gravy and vegetables.

When the Abyssinian woman saw this she said, 'O Allah! You have protected my respect. Usually You send two rotis for me every night, but today You sent enough for all three of us. After we had eaten, the tray ascended into the skies, and another tray descended with three containers of water. This water was sweet and delicious and I have never before nor since tasted such water. After this, the lady left. Sheikh Musaafir and myself continued our journey till we reached Makkah al-Mukarramah.

Once, while making Tawaaf in the Haram, the Noor of Allah descended on Adi bin Musaafir causing him to fall unconscious. By looking at him, it seemed as if he had passed away. I was still going towards him when I saw the same pious Abyssinian woman beside him. She shook him and said, 'That Allah Who caused you to die, is the same Allah Who will bring you back to life; that Allah before Whose Noor, none is equal. The world would have not come into existence and cannot exist without His Command. All this never was before He created it. Now, the Light and Power of Allah has filled the hearts and minds of the People of Intelligence and knowledge and this has caused their eyes to close'.

Just as she said these words, Sheikh Adi came back to his senses and stood up. "Then, while making Tawaaf Almighty Allah sent his blessed rays of light on me and I heard a voice from the Unseen which said, 'O Abdul Qadir, forget the physical world

and remember your Creator. We will show you signs from amongst Our wonders. Do not join your worldly thoughts with Our thoughts. Remain steadfast. Do not look for the pleasure of none other than that of Mine. Be prepared to be of benefit to the creation of Allah, since they are certain chosen servants of Mine who will reach Me through your Wasila'.

When this happened, I heard the voice of the Abyssinian woman saying, 'O Abdul Qadir! You have been blessed with a great gift today. I see an umbrella of light above your head and I see Angels all around you. Today, all the Awliya Allah are looking towards you'. After saying these words, she disappeared and was never to be seen again."

ENCOUNTERS WITH SHAYTAAN

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) states that during his life he had encountered various attacks from Shaytaan and his partners. Through the assistance of Almighty Allah he was always victorious over Shaytaan. Almighty Allah always protected him from this even when his nafs would try and force him into certain desires. When the Shayatin would attempt with vigour to sway the great al-Ghawth al-A'zam (ra), he would hear a voice saying, "O Abdul Qadir! Stand firm and challenge them. Our help is with you."

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) states that when he used to hear this, then he would stand firmly and challenge the Shayatin and become victorious over them. He says that at times the Shayatin would take daring and frightening forms and come towards him,

and he would say in Jalaal, “La Hawla wa la Quwwata Ila billahil Aliyyul Azeem” and firmly strike the face of the Shaytaan, who would then disappear.

- His First Encounter with Shaytaan

He says that once Shaytaan came to him in a very ugly form and with a foul odour emanating from that cursed presence. Shaytaan said, “I am Iblees. You have exhausted my students and me in our attempts to mislead you. I would now like to become your servant”. On hearing this, the great Ghawth said, “O Cursed One! Leave here at once.” After this command of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) Shaytaan still refused to leave. A Hand came from the Unseen and hit Shaytaan on his head with such force that it caused him to sink into the ground.

- His Second Encounter with Shaytaan

Sheikh Ghaus-e-A’zam (ra) states, “Once Shaytaan came to me and in his hand he had balls of fire, which he threw towards me. While this was happening, a veiled person on a white horse appeared and gave a sword in my hand. The moment I took the sword in my hand, Shaytaan turned and began to run.”

- His Third Encounter with Shaytaan

The great Saint (ra) states: "Once again I saw Shaytaan, but this time in a very sad state. I saw him sitting on the ground putting sand on his head. When he saw me he said, 'O Abdul Qadir, you have made me very sad and disillusioned.' I then said, 'O Cursed One! Go away. I am always asking protection from you (in Allah).' On hearing this, he said, 'These words hurt me even more.' He then spread enormous amounts of traps around me. I asked what this was and he said, 'These are the traps and nets of this world in which we trap people like you.' After this, for one year, I gave thought to these traps of the world until I broke every one of them".

- His Steadfastness on Shari'ah

After gaining in-depth academic and spiritual knowledge, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) was not only the most pious and knowledgeable personality, but he was a guiding light to the misguided and a firm mountain when it came to speaking against that which was incorrect. He always said that even until Qiyamah, none can change the Shari'ah. Any person who goes against the command of the Shari'ah is an evil person (Shaytaan). His son, Sheikh Ziauddeen Abu Nasr Moosa (ra) states the following regarding his father's encounter with Shaytaan during his time in seclusion:

"My father, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) once told me that he was one day making Mujahida in the jungle when he began to feel very thirsty. Suddenly, a cloud appeared above him and drops of cold rainwater fell over him. He drank and quenched his

thirst, as this was the Mercy of Allah. He said that after some time another cloud appeared over him giving out light so powerful that the ends of the sky became lit up with its brightness. He said that he then saw a figure in the cloud which said, "O Abdul Qadir! I am your Creator. I have made everything Halaal for you." He said that when he heard this, he read the Ta'awooz and the light disappeared immediately and turned into darkness. A voice then said, "O Abdul Qadir! You have been saved because of your knowledge and piety otherwise I have misled many Mystics, with this trap."

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) answered by saying, "Verily, it is the Grace of my Creator, which is with me and which has saved me from you."

I then asked my father how he had known that this was Shaytaan, and he replied, "His saying that he has made that which is Haram, Halal upon me, because Allah Ta'ala does not command wrong."

PLACES VISITED DURING JOURNEY

Karkh

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) usually visited the secluded fields of Karkh which were located on one side of Baghdad. This was an ideal place for prayers and devotional practices.

Shushtar (Tustar)

For eleven years Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) lived in Shushtar, a place twelve days journey from Baghdad. Here, the Sheikh spent his time in prayer and devotional exercises. It was here that Shaytaan attempted to fool the Sheikh, but to no avail.

Burj-Ajami

After this incident with Shaytaan, Al-Ghawth al-A'zam (ra) continued his striving in the path of Allah with even more faith and piety. He would sit in an old tower called Burj-Ajami in the outskirts of Baghdad where he would make Ibaadah and engross himself in the Zikr of Almighty Allah. Once while seated here, he entered into a deep spiritual condition in which the following incident took place. The Sheikh narrates:

"While sitting in the tower outside Baghdad, I once entered into a deep spiritual condition in which I made a vow with Almighty Allah that I will not eat or drink anything unless somebody puts a morsel of food or a drop of water into my mouth with their own hands. After taking this oath, forty days had passed without me eating or drinking anything. After forty days, a stranger arrived with some curry and bread. He placed it in front of me and left. Due to intense hunger, my nafs wanted to have the food, but my soul stopped me and reminded me of my vow to Allah. Then, I heard a huge noise inside me saying, "I am hungry, I am hungry." I paid no attention towards this as it was my nafs, and I continued making the Zikr of Almighty Allah.

It was during this time that Sheikh Abu Saeed Al-Mukharrami was passing by me. With his spiritual strength, he heard the noise from inside my stomach. He came close to me and said, "O Abdul Qadir! What is this noise?" I replied, "This is the impatience of the nafs, otherwise the soul is satisfied." He then said, "Come to my house," and left. In my mind, I said that I would not go until I am made to do so. Just then Hazrat Khidr (Alaihis Salaam) arrived and said, "Stand up and go to the house of Abu Saeed Al-Mukharrami." Thus, I stood up and went to the house of Sheikh Abu Saeed Al-Mukharrami and found him standing at the door of his house. On seeing me he said, "O Abdul Qadir! Was my saying not sufficient for you that Hazrat Khidr (Alaihis Salaam) had to command you to come to my house?" Saying this, he then took me into his house and fed me with his own hands until I had eaten and drank enough."

Sheikh Abu Saeed Al-Mukharrami bestowed Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) with a Khirqa (Sufi robe), blessed him with the highest spiritual status and the rank of Khalifa."

Aiwan Kasra

Sheikh Abu Muhammad Talha bin Muzaffer (ra) narrates:

"Once the Sheikh, talking about the days of his spiritual exercise, revealed: "I once had nothing to eat for 20 days. During this period, I proceeded to the ruins of the palace of Aiwan Kasra in search of fruit or something permitted. There I found 70 saints already searching for some food."

Having seen this, I returned to Baghdad. On my way I met a person who gave me some money and revealed that it was sent by my mother. I took the money and went straight to those 70 saints whom I had previously seen. I kept a little with me and distributed the rest among them. With the rest of the money that I had kept, I purchased some food and shared it with the poor and hungry."

Al-Mada'in

The Sheikh also lived and spent his time in devotion in the ruins of Al-Mada'in.

INITIATION INTO THE SPIRITUAL ORDER

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) gained his spiritual training in Baghdad from two of the greatest Mystics of their time – Sheikh Hammad bin Muslim Ad Dabbaas (ra) and Sheikh Abu Saeed Al-Mukharrami (ra). Although he had gained many blessings from both these personalities, he had not yet pledged his spiritual allegiance to a spiritual guide (Peer-o-Murshid).

Finally, the time had come and according to the Will of Almighty Allah, he presented himself in the court of Sheikh Abu Saeed Al-Mukharrami (ra) and became his disciple (Mureed) thus joining his Halqa and spiritual order. Sheikh Abu Saeed (ra) showed much love and attention to this unique disciple and blessed him with gems of spiritualism and mysticism.

Once while Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) and others were seated in front of the Sheikh, he asked Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) to

fetch something. While he was gone, Sheikh Al-Mukharrami (ra) addressing those present said, "One day, the foot of that young man will be on the shoulders of all the Awliya Allah and all the Awliya of his time will humble themselves before him".

After Sheikh Abu Saeed Al-Mukharrami (ra) admitted Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) into the spiritual order, he fed him a meal with his own hands. Concerning this, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) says, "For every morsel of food that my Sheikh-e-Tareeqat put into my mouth, my heart began to fill with the light of Marifah."

Sheikh Abu Saeed Al-Mukharrami (ra) then dressed Al-Ghawth al-A'zam (ra) in the Garb of Sainthood (Khirqa) and said: "This Khirqa was given to Sayyiduna Ali-e-Murtaza by the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He in turn gave it to Khwaja Hassan Basri (ra) and from him through generations it reached me". Once Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) had been dressed in this Garb, the rays of Noor could be seen descending upon him. The Khirqa (Saintly Garb) that was bestowed upon the great Saint had been handed down from generation to generation. A tree depicting how the Khirqa Mubarak reached Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) is shown below:

SPIRITUAL CHAIN

His Silsila (spiritual chain) is traced back to the Beloved Prophet (ﷺ) as follows:

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra), disciple of

Sheikh Abu Saeed Al-Mukharrami (ra), disciple of

Sheikh Abu'l Hasan Ali bin Muhammad Al-Quraishi (ra), disciple of

Sheikh Abu'l Farah Tartoosi (ra), disciple of

Sheikh Abu'l Fazal Abdul Wahid Tamimi (ra), disciple of

Sheikh Abu Bakr Abdullah Shibli (ra), disciple of

Sheikh Junaid al-Baghdadi (ra), disciple of

Sheikh Abu al-Hasan Sari al-Saqati (ra), disciple of

Sheikh Maruf al-Karkhi (ra), disciple of

Sheikh Dawood Ta'i (ra), disciple of

Sheikh Habib al-Ajami (ra), disciple of

Sheikh Hasan al-Basri (ra), disciple of

Sayyadina Ali ibn Abi Talib, 4th Khalifa of

Sayyidina Muhammad ibn Abdullah (ﷺ)

RETURN TO BAGHDAD

Before his return, he saw in a vision that he was walking along a street in Baghdad, where a sick and emaciated man lying on the roadside greeted him. When the Sheikh answered the salutation, the man asked him to help him to sit up. On the Saint's giving him the help asked for, the man sat up and began to grow miraculously big in stature. Seeing the Saint frightened at the phenomenon, the stranger allayed his fear saying, "I am the religion of your grandfather. I became diseased and miserable, but God has revived me through your help." This event foreshadowed the future career of the Sheikh in terms of reviving the religion of Islam.

Falsehood and cults were beginning to spread at an alarming rate. The respect for knowledge and for the people of knowledge was wearing thin in the hearts of the people of Baghdad. It was a time of great deterioration in the following of the Sunnah. It was a time when there was a dire need for a Reformer of the ways of the people and a Reviver of the true Faith. This Reformer and Reviver was none other than Imam-ul-Awliya Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra). He entered the arena at this time of corruption and conflict and within a short space of time; he once again turned the blessed city of Baghdad into the center of learning and spiritualism.

He was over fifty years old by the time he returned to Baghdad, in 521 AH/ 1127 AD, where he began to preach in public. Sheikh

Abu Saeed Al-Mukharrami (ra) appointed Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) his successor as Principal of the School of Hanbali Law (Madrassa Babul Ajaz), a post which he held for over thirty years.

THE ROSE OF BAGHDAD

On returning to Baghdad from his spiritual journey Sheikh Abdul Qadir (ra) faced a tribulation which was overcome with majestic wisdom. Many of the Islamic elite of Baghdad were perturbed by the return of Sheikh Abdul Qadir (ra) who, due to his great reputation and spiritual status, had amassed a large following of disciples. The scholars gathered and devised a way by which they could send a clear message to Sheikh Abdul Qadir indicating their displeasure at his presence in Baghdad.

They ordered a large vessel be filled to the brim and sent it to the quarters of Sheikh Abdul Qadir (ra). The container represented Baghdad and the water represented the scholars in Baghdad. This indicated that Baghdad hadn't any more room for a new Sheikh.

With an ingenious stroke of wisdom and demonstrating his extraordinary powers, the Sheikh plucked a rose which he placed on top of the water. He then ordered the vessel be taken back to the senders who on seeing it, immediately acknowledged the great spiritual wisdom of the Sheikh and assigned him the title 'The Rose of Baghdad'.

As it has been stated earlier, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) had come to Baghdad when it was a city full of corruption and misled persons. It was also during this time that the misled sought to "debate" their contention that the Holy Quran was allegedly "a

creation". It was a very testing time for Muslims all over the world, since the Crusades had begun, where the entire Christian world was bent on destroying the Muslim Empire. The passage of time during which al-Ghawth al-A'zam (ra) had completed his studies and undertaken twenty-five years of spiritual exercises, had resulted in the condition in Baghdad becoming even worse.

LECTURES

During the month of Shawwal, 521 AH, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) saw Allah's Messenger ﷺ in his dream advising him to make a speech in order to impart his knowledge to others.

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) asked to be blessed with the eloquence of an Arab, as he was an Ajmi (non-Arab). Allah's Messenger ﷺ recited the following verse seven times and blew on the face of the Sheikh:

Yusuf Ali: Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: for thy Lord knoweth best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance.

Qur'an 16:125

The same day after Zuhr prayer, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) mounted the pulpit and addressed the people with a sermon. The audience was entranced by his words. When Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) spoke he was prompted by the Grace of Allah causing the miraculous and revolutionary impact of his words.

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) usually delivered lectures thrice a week – on Wednesday evenings, Fridays and on Sunday mornings. This blessed practice continued for forty years, from 521 AH. to 561 AH. At first, he began delivering lectures and teaching people in the Madrassa.

The people of Baghdad and neighbouring cities began flocking to the lectures of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) in such great numbers that the Madrassa became too small for these gatherings. There would often be no place inside the Madrassa, forcing people to sit out on the streets to listen to his lectures and advice. In 568 AH a few houses around the Madrassa were purchased and incorporated to make the Madrassa bigger. After some time, even this proved to be too small. The Mimbar of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) was then carried and placed in a massive open area (Eid Gaah) where more than 70,000 people would present themselves in each of his lectures. In each of his gatherings, there would be four people recording his lectures in writing and two Qaaris, who recited the Holy Quran. His lectures became so famous in a very short space of time that it attracted people from all parts of the world, thus making Baghdad Shareef the centre of learning and spiritualism once again.

His lectures were full of knowledge and wisdom. They were so influential and powerful that listeners would go into spiritual ecstasy. Some of them would tear their clothes. Others would fall unconscious. On some occasions, certain listeners would become so lost in the gems of love for Allah and His Rasool ﷺ that the great Saint presented in his lectures, that they would even pass away in this condition. On various occasions, even non-Muslims came to his lectures. After listening to his lectures they would

find that they could not refute anything he said and they would willingly accept Islam. In addition to the ordinary members of the public, Rijaal-ul-Ghaib and Jinns also frequented his blessed gatherings. Akaabireen and Mashaa'ikh also frequented his gatherings. It was a training school for the young, a place to repent for the sinful, a place of guidance for the misguided, and a bank of spiritualism for the spiritually bankrupt.

His voice was very stern and sharp. One of the miracles of his Majlis was that each and every person sitting there heard him alike, even though in those times, there was no means of voice amplification, such as microphones and the like. Al-Ghawth al-A'zam's (ra) close student, Sayyidi Abdullah Jabaa'ee (ra), states that during this era of his lectures, more than 100,000 sinners repented at the blessed hands of al-Ghawth al-A'zam (ra) and thousands of Jews and Christians accepted Islam at his hands.

All the great scholars agree that during that era the majority of the people in Baghdad repented from their wrongs at the hands of the great Saint and also became his disciples. Once, thirteen Christians accepted Islam in the Majlis of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra). When they were requested to explain their acceptance of Islam, they said that they heard of the religion of Islam and that their hearts were pleased with this Deen but they had been in search of a true servant of Allah who would, by looking at them, dispel the darkness of their hearts. While they were in search of this true servant of Allah, they heard a Voice from the Unseen saying, "Go to Sheikh Abdul Qadir in Baghdad and bring Islam on his hands, for it is he who will cleanse your hearts and fill it with light of Imaan (Faith)". When the thirteen Christians

received this message from the Unseen, they travelled to Baghdad and accepted Islam on the hands of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra)

On one occasion, a monk named "Sanaan" presented himself in the gathering of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) and accepted Islam on the hands of the great Saint. After bringing Imaan, he stood up in the gathering and said: "O people! I am a citizen of Yemen and for many years I lived in seclusion as a Christian Monk. For some time now, I have realised the truth of Islam, but after looking at the ways of the present Muslims, I delayed my acceptance of Islam and made a vow that I will accept Islam on the hands of a person who is the most pious amongst people. After making this vow, one night, I dreamt of Sayyiduna Esa (as) who said, 'O Sanaan! Go to Baqhdad and accept Islam on his hands. At the present moment, there is none on this earth that is more pious and firm on religion than he is, and there is none more exalted than him in this time.' After this dream, I came here today and accepted Islam and I have found him to be as I have heard.

Al-Ghawth al-A'zam's (ra) lectures were inspiring to all who frequented his Majlis. His words were kind but firm. He was not swayed by the power or status of anyone. If they were wrong, he did not hesitate to correct them in his Majlis or anywhere else. He feared none but Allah and made those who were in his Majlis aware of this. Once, one of the close ministers of the Khalifa Azeezud'deen came to the Majlis of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra). When he saw him, the great Saint said, "The condition of those like you is such, that one man is lost in the slaveship of another. Who then is the true slave of Allah?" He then addressed Azeezud'deen directly and said, "Stand up! Keep your hand on

my hand so that you may distance yourself from this mundane world and run towards your Creator." Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) delivered thousands of lectures in his lifetime on various topics. His gatherings were frequented by thousands of ordinary people, learned scholars and great Saints. It has been stated in authentic sources that during his lectures there would be approximately four hundred scribes who recorded his lectures in writing.

Besides giving sermons, every day in the morning and afternoon the Sheikh gave lessons in Quran Tafsir, Hadith, principles of Islamic law and other allied subjects. After midday prayers he was seen issuing fatwas or verdicts on legal questions presented to him from all parts of the world. Every evening before Maghrib prayers, he would distribute bread among the poor. After the evening prayers it was his habit to sit for dinner because usually he fasted during the day throughout the year. Before every such meal it was his practice to have it proclaimed that anybody who needed food in the neighbourhood could come and join him. After Isha prayers, in the manner of all saintly persons, he would retire to his chamber and spend the greater part of the night in the worship of God, a practice recommended by the Holy Quran for all who would claim to be in close spiritual relationship with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. As a true follower of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he used to serve humanity during the day and serve his Creator during the greater part of the night.

WIVES & CHILDREN

Up until 521 AH, at age of fifty-one, he never thought of marriage. He even regarded it as a sort of impediment in the path of spiritual efforts. But as he came to establish contact with the people, in obedience to the commandment of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and in deference to his example, he married four wives, all of whom were models of virtue and devoted to him:

- Sayyida Bibi Madina (ra)
- Sayyida Bibi Sadiqa (ra)
- Sayyida Bibi Mu'minah (ra)
- Sayyida Bibi Mahboobah (ra)

Once someone asked Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) why he had made Nikah in his unique and elevated spiritual condition. The great Ghawth (ra) replied:

"I would not have married but my beloved forefather, Nabi Muhammad (ﷺ) has commanded me to marry. It is on this basis that I have made Nikah. I was, in reality, afraid of making Nikah, for this reason that my time may be lost in other things rather than in the love of my Creator, but when the time came, then My Creator blessed me with four wives, and each one of them loved me dearly."

Due to his true and pure intention of Nikah, he never found any time lost from his Ibadah and from his services to the Deen even

after marriage. Sheikh Sayyidi Abdul Jabbar (ra), one of the sons of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra), states concerning his mother,

"When my mother would enter a dark place, it would immediately become bright. Once my father Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) entered one such place where my mother was, and on his entrance, the light caused by her presence disappeared. On seeing this, my blessed father said, 'This light is not enough. It has disappeared in my light. Let me make it more powerful'. From this day onwards, when my mother entered a dark place, then her light was like that of the full moon."

He had forty-nine children; twenty-seven sons and twenty-two daughters. Many of his sons became famous for their education and learning, and they and their descendants spread Islam in other parts of the world:

- Sheikh Saifuddin Abdul Wahab (ra)
- Sheikh Sharfuddin Abu Muhammad Issa (ra)
- Sheikh Hafiz Abdul Razzak Tajuddin (ra)
- Sheikh Abu Bakr Abdul Aziz (ra)
- Sheikh Sirajuddin Abdul Jabbar (ra)
- Sheikh Yahya (ra)
- Sheikh Musa (ra)
- Sheikh Abul Fazl Muhammad (ra)
- Sheikh Abu Ishaq Ibrahim (ra)

- Sheikh Abdullah (ra)
- Sheikh Abdur Rehman (ra)
- Sheikh Abu Nasser Musa (ra)

FINAL ADVICE AND PASSING ON

Advice to his Children

When the Sheikh was suffering from illness, his son Abdul Wahab asked him: "Give me a parting admonition on which I should act after you have left this world." The Sheikh replied:

"Fear Almighty Allah. Fear none but Allah. Always turn towards Him. Ask all your wishes from Allah. Do not turn to any besides Allah. Do not have faith in any but in Allah. Remain firm on Tawhid (belief in One Allah). There is no salvation without Tawhid. When the heart becomes linked with Allah then nothing else seems to look good to him. I have reached the level of True Love. It is a domain where worldly love has no place."

Presence of Other Beings

Just before his demise, he turned to the rest of his sons and said,

"Move away from me. Right now, you seem to be before me, but in reality you are not the only ones here. With the exception of yourselves, there are other creations of Allah here as well. Give

enough space for them. Show respect to them. Give way. This is now a place of exalted pardon and forgiveness. Do not crowd this place."

After saying these words, he would continue saying, "And may there be peace, blessings and Allah's Mercy upon you. May Allah forgive us all and may He bestow His Mercy upon us." This was his reply to the greetings of the Angels that had presented themselves before him. It is stated that he replied to their greetings for a full twenty-four hours.

Allegiance to Ahl al-Sunnah

Sheikh Abdur Razzaq (ra) and Sheikh Moosa (ra), both sons of al-Ghawth al-A'zam (ra) state:

"Sheikh lifted both his hands towards the sky and said, 'May there be peace, blessings and Allah's Mercy upon you. Repent sincerely from your hearts and join the Sawaad-e-A'zam (Huge Jamaat or Ahl al-Sunnah Wal-Jamaat). It was for this reason that I was sent. In other words, I was sent to command you to follow and be obedient to our Beloved Nabi Muhammad (ﷺ). Always be gentle. He then said, 'The distance between you, I and all the creation is like the distance between the skies and the earth. Thus, you should not think of anyone equal to me, or think of me equal to any other."

<u>His Illness</u>

It is further reported that his son, Sheikh Abdul Aziz (ra) asked him about his disease. On this he said:

"Surely no one, neither any man nor any jinn, nor any angel knows or understands my disease. The knowledge of God is not diminished by the command of God. The command changes but the knowledge does not change. The command may be abrogated but not knowledge. God causes to pass away and establishes what He pleases, and with Him is the basis of the Book:

Yusuf Ali: He cannot be questioned for His acts, but they will be questioned (for theirs).

Qur'an 21:23

It has also been reported that his son Sheikh Abdul Jabbar (ra) asked him: "Which part of your body gives you pain?" He replied :

"All my organs are hurting me except my heart. There is no pain there, for it is with Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He)."

His Last Moments

Then death came to him, as he was saying:

"Seek help in the words: There is none worthy of worship but Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He, the Ever-Living, Who has no fear of passing away. Glory be to Him Who exults in His

omnipotence, and subdues His servants with death. There is none worthy of worship but Allah. Muhammad (ﷺ) is Allah's Messenger."

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) passed away in 561 AH (1166 AD), at the age of ninety-one (or ninety-two according to another narrative). It has been reported that such a large number of people had gathered for his funeral procession that his family members had to bury him during the night.

The day was the 11th of Rabi' al-Thani. This date is commemorated by his admirers up to this day and is known as Giarwin Sharif in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent.

SELECTED QUOTES

O Peaceful Nafs turn to God being satisfied and giving satisfaction. (Surah al-Fajr 27-28)

Be careful before meeting death.

When the heart is perfected all your conditions become perfect.

Good men abstain themselves from the world and conquer it by fear of God and piety.

My satisfaction with Taqdir (fate) has led me to God.

Make piety your weapon and make Tawhid (Unification of God) contemplation. Piety and sincerity in seclusion and beseeching God's help your army.

When you get the ability assign this world to your Nafs, the Nafs, the next world to your heart and the Lord to your soul.

Be constant in fear of God and his worship. Do not fear anyone else nor expect anything from any one. Save yourself – Fear God, fear God and fear God.

Three things are indispensable for a believer in all conditions of life. He should keep those commandments of God: he should abstain from the forbidden things; and he should be pleased with the decree of Providence.

Then He will give you death in your will and desires, and when you are dead in your will and desires it will be said to you: "May God have mercy on you" and He will restore you to (a new) life.

When you are in a particular condition do not wish for another condition either higher or lower. Thus, when you arc at the palace gate of the King do not wish for an entrance into the palace unless you are made to enter it by compulsion and not of your own accord.

Wealth is your servant and you are the servant of the Lord.

Do not run away from God for He will overtake you.

Be aware of sin in all its form in all your organs of body and in your heart.

Trials and calamities strengthen the heart and certainty and establish the faith and patience and weaken the animal-self and its desires.

Then know that God is every day in a new state of glory, in chancing and altering and raising and lowering (people).

The worldly life is a cultivation ground of the life hereafter; and the good deeds of the Prophets and Awliya after the performance of commandments and prohibitions consist in patience and pleasure and reconcilement in the midst of trial.

There is no spiritual stale nor any spiritual station but has fear and hope attached to it. These two are like two wings of a bird but for which no flight can be perfect. And this is true of every state and station. With this much of difference that every state has its corresponding fear and hope.

Make your life after death your capital money and your wordily

life its profit. Spend your time first of all in acquiring your life after death.

Do you not know that for every occurrence of event there is an appointed time and for every calamity there is a point of consummation?

All the parts of my body are ailing excepting my heart which has no pain in it and it is sound with God.

And a dervish is he who is indifferent to everything besides God.

Tasawwuf is based on eight qualities:

1. Generosity like that of Prophet Ibrahim (as),
2. Cheerful submission like that of Prophet Ishaq (as),
3. Patience like that of Yaqub (as),
4. Prayer like that of Prophet Zakariyyah (as),
5. Poverty like that of Prophet Yahya (as),
6. Wearing of woollen dress like that of Prophet Musa (as),
7. Travelling about like that of Prophet Isa (as) and,
8. Religious poverty like that of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

In everything there is an attribute from the attributes of God and every name is a sign one of his names. So surely you are between His names and His attributes and works, inwardly through His

power and outwardly through His wisdom. He is manifest in His attributes and concealed in His person. His person is concealed in His attributes and His attributes are concealed in His works And He has revealed His knowledge through His will and He has expressed His will in movements. And He has concealed His skill and His workmanship through His wilt. So He is hidden in His invisibility and He is manifest in His wisdom and power. There is nothing like even a likeness of Him and He is hearing and seeing.

Do not will anything which is not the will of God.

Human consciousness is divided into three conditions raising upward in the scale of evolution:

1. Nafs al-Ammara i.e, unruly animal self.
2. Nafs al-Lawwama, i.e. struggling moral self.
3. Nafs al-Mutma'inna, i.e. composed God realized self.

Hazrat Sirri Saqti

QUOTES & SAYINGS

1. The genuine mystic dwells in the state of unity.

2. The worst punishment from God is the separation from Him.

3. O God! Whatever punishment you may inflict upon me, do not punish me with the humiliation of being veiled from Thee.

4. In his youth he would say: "One should worship Him in his youth."

5. One should avoid rich the neighbour, the rich intellectual, and one who reads the Quran on payment.

6. The entire world is worthless excepting five things: (1) to eat for survival, (2) to drink water in order to relieve thirst, (3) clothes to cover body, (4) house to dwell in, (5) knowledge to act upon.

7. Sinning for necessity might be pardonable but self-conceit and pride is unpardonable since the sin of Adam was the accomplishment of desire and sin of Satan's self-conceit.

8. Truthfulness (sidq) is not attainable to one who associates with the people too much.

9. On the Day of Resurrection all the nations will be called by their respective prophets, but the Awliya Allah will be called by Allah Himself, Glorified is He.

10. If a heart has something else (other that God), these five things don't enter the heart: Fear, hope, modesty, intimacy and love. And those nearest to Him are given ability in the measure of his proximity.

11. Intimacy and modesty arrive at gate of heart. But if the heart has purity and fear of God, they stay there, otherwise they return from it.

12. The tongue and face reveal condition of the heart. But the heart is of three kinds. The first is the heart that is like a big mountain which is unshakable. The second is that heart which is firm like tree but is shaken by a wind storm. The third is that heart which is like birds who fly in the air.

13. He who is obedient to God, the entire world becomes obedient to him.

14. I wish that the sorrow of all mankind would be thrown upon me.

15. I look to my nose several times a day fearing lest my face has turned black.

16. To prefer His adoration over one's carnal desires causes attainment of the highest spiritual perfection.

17. The best of conduct is to endure the oppression of people patiently instead of sending harm upon them.

18. To meet people with hypocrisy separates one from God.

19. The Gnostic attains peace after annihilating himself in Him.

20. The Gnostic has an elevated spiritual rank. He eats less, sleeps less and relaxes less. He is like a shining moon that radiates others and bears the burden of everything on earth, shows the right path like light and saturates the heart like water giving it new life.

21. He who meditates into the mysteries of the holy Quran is discerning in true sense.

22. Those nearest to the Divine presence are given spiritual acumen in proportion to his proximity to the Divine sanctuary.

23. He who cannot control his own lower soul, how can he purify the same of others?

24. In his secret communion with God, he would often say: O Allah! Your loftiness prevented me from supplicating, your gnosis conferred me intimacy and had you forbidden glorification of You by the tongue, I would have never implored you with it, because the tongue does not have the capability to recount your Attributes.

25. Whoever forgives while he has the power to take revenge is forgiven in his turn by Allah when he deserves punishment.

26. Man's peace depends on five principles: avoid associating with evil people, be distant from ordinary people, and in this distance taste the flavour of your own actions; at the same time, refrain from blaming or finding fault with people even to the extent of ignoring their rebellion against Allah. There are also five faults from which one should cleanse oneself: hypocrisy, argument, affection, artificiality, and love of property and rank; and five curses from which one should free oneself: miserliness, ambition, anger, greed, and gluttony.

27. Sari al-Saqati informs us of the following characteristics of the

Sufis: They refuse to act for the fulfilments of their egos or to obtain anything that has a taste of willfulness, lust, pleasure, or whim. They are able to resist the commands of their egos. They firmly pursue five goals: never to be envious of what other

28. people have, never to trouble other people, and always to control their hands, stomachs, and their sexual desires. They are humble and they follow the ones who are superior to them in mystical knowledge. They turn away from five evils: from everything that is temporal, from people, from desires, from the wish to be leaders, from the love of being praised. They wish for five gifts: that little of this world be given to them, but that Truth be given to them; that the fear of Allah be given to them, that the company of the ones close to Allah be given to them and that they be saved from the company of the ones who oppose Allah; that they be given the ability to know and do things that please Allah; and that they receive the things rejected by the ignorant.

29. Junaid went early one morning to see Sari al-Saqati. Sari told him, "Abu al-Qasim, tonight I was given a little inspiration and my soul was told, 'O Sari, I created men and they were bound to Me and they were coming to Me. When I showed them the world, nine-tenths of them became world-bound and one-tenth remained with Me. When I told them about Paradise, nine- tenths of those who remained desired Paradise and only one-tenth remained with Me. When I poured My troubles and My pains upon those who had stayed with Me, they cried for help and nine-tenths left and one-tenth remained with Me. I told them, "You neither wanted the world nor Paradise, nor did you run

away from My troubles and pain." They said, "You know what we desire." I said, "I will pour upon you such calamities that the mountains could not bear their weight." They said, "As long as they come from You, it is well with us."

Hazrat Ali al-Hujwiri

Madhab: Hanbali

Born: Circa 400 AH / 1009 AD Hujwir, Ghazni, Ghaznavid Empire (Modern-day Afghanistan)

Passed away: Circa 465 AH / 1072 AD Lahore, Pakistan

Resting place: Lahore, Pakistan

Hazrat Syed Hafiz Haji Abu al-Hasan ibn Usman ibn Ali al-Jalabi Al-Hujwiri (ra) also known as Data Ganj Bakhsh (The Master Who Bestows Treasures) or Data Sahib was a great Persian Sufi scholar, writer and poet who lived during the 5th Century AH (11th Century AD). He significantly contributed to the spreading of Islam in South Asia.

FAMILY & LINEAGE

Hazrat Ali Hujwiri (ra) was both a Hasani and Husseini Syed.

He was blessed with direct lineage to the Holy Prophet ﷺ through his father who was a direct descendant of Hazrat Imam Hasan , son of Hazrat Ali . His silsila-e-nasab (family lineage) is as follows:

- Hazrat Ali Hujwiri (ra), son of
- Hazrat Mohammad Usman (ra), son of
- Hazrat Abu al-Hasan Ali (ra), son of
- Hazrat Abdur Rahman (ra), son of
- Hazrat Shah Shuja (ra), son of
- Hazrat Abu al-Hasan Ali (ra), son of
- Hazrat Hasan Asghar (ra), son of
- Hazrat Zaid (ra), son of
- Hazrat Hasan, son of
- Hazrat Ali

Hazrat Ali Hujwiri (ra) was the ninth descendant of Hazrat Ali. After the tragedy of Karbala, many of the descendants of Hazrat Ali dispersed to foreign lands and among them were the forefathers of Hazrat Ali Hujwiri who migrated to the Ghaznavid Empire, which is now modern-day Afghanistan.

Hazrat Ali Hujwiri (ra) was also blessed with direct lineage to the Holy Prophet ﷺ through his mother who was a descendant of Hazrat Husayn. His mother was greatly devoted to religious

worship and was committed to bettering the welfare of the poor and the suffering.

His maternal uncle was highly respected and had the title of "Tajul Auliya". Adjacent to the mausoleum of Hazrat Tajul Auliya lays the mausoleum belonging to the mother of Hazrat Ali Hujwiri (ra).

Although the family lived in fairly affluent circumstances, they were held in high esteem for their piety and religious devotion.

BIRTH

Hazrat Ali Hujwiri (ra) was born in the city of Ghazni during the reign of Mahmud of Ghazni where his family had settled. He was known as Ali l-Jalabi Al-Hujwiri (ra), as he had lived in Jalab and Hujwir, two different quarters (Mohallas) within the city of Ghazni.

The exact date of Hazrat Ali Hujwiri's (ra) birth is not known, with estimates ranging from 400 AH to 406AH. Little is known of his early life or his education.

TRAVELS

After having completed his studies, he travelled extensively in order to acquire knowledge from well-known scholars as well as to pay homage to saints. He is reported to have travelled for forty years, during which he always offered his Friday prayers in congregation.

He travelled to Syria, Iraq, Persia, Kohistan, Azerbaijan, Tabaristan, Kerman, Khorasan, Transoxiana amongst other places and met several prominent Sufis of the time. In Khorasan alone he is reported to have met 300 Sufis. He relates in Kashf al-Mahjub:

"It would be difficult to mention all the Sheikhs of Khorasan. I have met over three hundred saints in Khorasan alone residing separately and who had such mystical endowments that a single one of them would have been enough for the whole world. They are the luminaries of love and prosperity on the spiritual sky of Khorasan."

After the acquisition of academic knowledge in the fields of his search, he diverted his energy in quest of an accomplished spiritual teacher (Murshid-e-Kamil). He travelled great distances in search of a personality who could satiate his thirst for spirituality, rather than mere academic superficial knowledge. Hazrat Ali Hujwiri (ra) states in Kashf al-Mahjub:

"Theologians have made no distinction between 'Ilm (knowledge) and Ma'rifat (gnosis), except when they say that God may be called 'Alim (knowing), but not 'Arif (gnostic), since the latter description lacks Divine blessing. The Sufi Shaykhs give the name of Ma'rifat (gnosis) to knowledge that includes both religious practices and states; the knower of which could express his state they would call 'Arif (gnostic).

On the other hand, they give the name of 'Ilm (knowledge) to every knowledge that is devoid of spiritual and religious practice, and one who has such knowledge they call 'Alim (knowing).

One, then, who knows the meaning and reality of a thing they call 'Arif, and one who knows merely the verbal expression and keeps it in his memory without keeping the spiritual reality they call 'Alim. For this reason, when the Sufis wish to criticize a rival they call him danishmand (possessing knowledge). This seems objectionable, but the Sufis do not intend to blame the man for having acquired knowledge, rather they blame him for neglecting the practice of religion, because the 'alim depends on himself, but the 'Arif depends on his Lord."

INITIATION INTO THE SUFI ORDER

Hazrat Ali Hujwiri (ra) was accepted as a Mureed (spiritual disciple) by Hazrat Sheikh Abu al-Fadl Muhammad bin al-Hasan al-Khuttali (ra). His Silsila (spiritual chain) is traced back to the Beloved Prophet ﷺ as follows:

- Hazrat Sheikh Ali Hujwiri (ra), disciple of
- Hazrat Sheikh Abu al-Fadl al-Khuttali (ra), disciple of
- Hazrat Sheikh Abu al-Hasan al-Husri (ra), disciple of
- Hazrat Sheikh Abu Bakr Abdullah Shibli (ra), disciple of
- Hazrat Sheikh Junaid al-Baghdadi (ra), disciple of
- Hazrat Sheikh Abu al-Hasan Sari al-Saqati (ra), disciple of

- Hazrat Sheikh Maruf al-Karkhi (ra), disciple of
- Hazrat Sheikh Dawood Ta'i (ra), disciple of
- Hazrat Sheikh Habib al-Ajami (ra), disciple of
- Hazrat Sheikh Hasan al-Basri (ra), disciple of
- Sayyidina Ali ibn Abi Talib, Khalifa of
- Sayyidina Muhammad ibn Abdullah ﷺ

Hazrat Sheikh al-Khuttali (ra) is described by Hazrat Ali Hujwiri (ra) in Kashf-ul-Mahjoob:

"He is the teacher whom I follow in Sufism. He was versed in the science of Quranic exegesis and in traditions (Riwayat). In Sufism he follows the doctrine of Junayd. He was a disciple of Husri and a companion of Sirawani, and a contemporary of Abu Amr Qazwini and Abu al-Hasan bin Saliba. He spent sixty years in sincere retirement from the world, for the most part on Mount Lukam. He displayed many signs and proofs (of Saintship), but he did not wear the garb or adopt the external fashions of the Sufis, and he used to treat formalists with severity. I never saw any man who inspired me with greater awe than he did.

It is related that he said: "The world is but a single day, in which we are fasting, i.e. we get nothing from it, and are not occupied with it, because we have perceived its corruption and its "veils" and have turned our backs upon it."

Once I was pouring water on his hands in order that he might purify himself. The thought occurred to me: "Since everything is predestined, why should free men make themselves the slaves of

spiritual guides?" The Sheikh said: "O my son, I know what you are thinking. Be assured that there is a cause for every decree of Providence. When Allah wishes to bestow a crown and a kingdom on an ordinary man, He gives him repentance and employs him in the service of one of His friends, in order that this service leads him to nobility and honour."

Many such fine sayings he uttered to me every day.

He died at Bayt al-Jinn, a village situated at the head of a mountain pass between Baniyas and the river of Damascus. While he was counting last breaths, his head was resting on my bosom. At that time I was feeling hurt, as it is the nature of man to feel sad on departure of his close associate. The Sheikh said to me:

'O my son, I will tell you one article of belief which if you firmly follow, will deliver you from all troubles. Whatever good or evil Allah creates, do not in any place or circumstance quarrel with His action or feel aggrieved in your heart.'

He gave no further injunction, but yielded up his soul."

Other teachers and Sheikhs associated with Hazrat Ali Hujwiri (ra) are:

Abu al-Abbas Ahmad bin Muhammad al-Ashqani (or al-Shaqani)

Hazrat Ali Hujwiri (ra) describes him:

"He was an Imam in every branch of fundamental and derivative sciences of religion, and an accomplished venerable in all

respects. He had met a great number of eminent Sufi Sheikhs. He is counted among the eminent Imams and Sheikhs. His doctrine was based on 'annihilation' (Fana), and his expressions used to be highly complex. Some fools imitated him and have adopted his difficult writing style. When in its spiritual meaning it is not laudable to imitate then how it is right to imitate a mere expression! I was very intimate with him, and he had also a sincere affection for me. He was my teacher in some sciences. In my whole life I have never seen anyone, who held the Shariat in greater veneration than him. He kept himself detached from all created things.

Because of his complicated writings on account of the subtlety of his theological expositions only an Imam of profound insight could derive instruction from him. He always had a natural disgust of this world and the next, and would constantly exclaim, 'I yearn for a non-existence that has no existence.' And he used to say:

'Every man desires for impossible, and I too have desire for impossible, which I surely know will never be realized, namely that Allah should take me to a non-existence that will never return to existence, for stations and miracles are all veils and troubles and the man is becoming a suitor of his own veil. It is better to get annihilated in vision than being remain in constant state of veil. Almighty Allah is a Being that is not subject to none being, what loss would His kingdom suffer if I become a nonentity that shall never be endowed with existence?'

This is a sound principle in a real annihilation."

Abu'l-Qasim bin Ali bin Abdullah al-Gurgani (ra)

"He was unique and incomparable Qutb of his time. His initial state was excellent and strong. He performed long journeys with conscientious observance (of Shariat). All the aspirants of his time were whole heartedly inclined to him and seekers of the path of Truth had full faith on him. He possessed marvellous power of revealing the inwardly states of novices (Kashf-i waq'a-i muridan). He was well learned in various branches of knowledge. All his disciples because of their knowledge and conduct are ornaments of the society in which they move. God willing, he will have an excellent successor, whose authority the whole body of Sufis will recognize, namely, Abu Ali al-Fadl b. Muhammad al-Farmadhi who has fully committed himself to the service of his Sheikh and has turned his back on all (worldly) things. Through the blessings of that (renunciation), Allah has made him the spiritual mouthpiece (Zaban-i hal) of that venerable Sheikh."

Abu Ahmad Muzaffar bin Ahmad bin Hamdan (ra)

Hazrat Ali Hujwiri (ra) describes an interesting experience pertaining to Qawwali in Kashf-ul-Mahjoob:

"One day I came into his presence, when the weather was extremely hot, wearing a traveller's dress and with my hair in disorder. He said to me: 'Tell me what you wish at this moment.' I replied that I wished to hear some music (Sama'). He immediately sent for a singer (Qawwal) and a number of musicians. Being young and enthusiastic and filled with the ardour of a novice, I became deeply excited as the strains of the music fell on my ear.

After a while, when my ecstasy subsided, he asked me how I liked it. I told him that I had enjoyed it very much. He said:

'A time will come when this music will be no more to you than the croaking of a raven. The influence of music only lasts so long as there is no contemplation, and as soon as contemplation is attained, music has no power. Take care not to accustom yourself to this, lest it grow part of your nature and keep you back from higher things.'"

Abu'l Qasim Abdul Karim Bin Hawazin al-Qushayri (ra)

"In his time he was a wonder. His rank is high and his position is great, and his spiritual life and manifold virtues are well known to the people of the present age. He is the author of many fine sayings and exquisite works, all of them profoundly theosophical, in every branch of science. Allah rendered his feelings and his tongue secure from anthropomorphism (Hashw). I have heard that he said:

'The Sufi is like the disease called Birsam, which begins with delirium and ends in silence; for when the disease sets in, you are dumb."

Sufism has two sides: Ecstasy (Wajd) and visions (Numud). Visions belong to novices, and the expression of such visions is delirium (Hadhayan). Ecstasy belongs to adepts, and the expression of ecstasy, while the ecstasy continues, is impossible. So long as they are only seekers they utter lofty aspirations, which seem delirium even to those who aspire (Ahl-i himmal), but when they have attained, they cease, and no more express anything either by word or sign. Similarly, since Moses was a beginner

(Mubtadi) all his desire was for vision of Allah; he expressed his desire and said, 'My Lord, show me [Yourself] that I may look at You.' (7:143). This expression of an unattained desire seemed like delirium. Our Apostle, however, was an adept (Muntahi) and firmly established (Mutamakkin). When his person arrived at the station of desire, his desire was annihilated and he said, 'I cannot praise Thee duly.'"

ARRIVAL IN LAHORE

One night Hazrat Ali Hujwiri (ra) saw his spiritual guide and teacher Hazrat Sheikh Abu al-Fadl al-Khuttali in a dream saying to him: "O, my son! we have appointed you as the Qutb of Lahore. Be prepared and start forthwith for Lahore." He replied, "Your Holiness has already appointed Khwaja Hasan Zanjani as the Qutb of Lahore. What is the need for this humble being in his presence there? What is the importance, significance, and implication of the order of your holiness?" Thereupon his spiritual guide and teacher said: "O my son! Do not argue with me and leave for Lahore without loss of time."

Around 431 AH, in the reign of Mahmud Ghaznavi, he left Ghazni for Lahore along with Hazrat Abu Saeed Hujwiri (ra) and Hazrat Ahmad Hammadi Sarkhasi (ra). Hazrat Abu Saeed Hujwiri (ra) was a fellow townsman of Hazrat Ali Hujwiri (ra) and the book Kashf-ul-Mahjoob was written in accordance to his request. Hazrat Ali Hujwiri (ra) says regarding Hazrat Ahmad Hammadi Sarkhasi (ra):

"Khwaja Ahmad Hammadi Sarkhasi was the falcon of his time.

For some time we remained together and I witnessed many wondrous experiences from him. He was a man of the path of the Shariat."

When he had reached the outskirts of the city, it had grown dark. He stayed outside the city and entered it in the morning. To his great surprise, he saw a funeral. On his inquiring, he learnt that it was the funeral of Hazrat Sheikh Khwaja Hasan Zanjani (ra), who had passed away the previous night. He led the funeral prayers.

MIRACLE IN LAHORE

After he had permanently settled in Lahore, he constructed a monastery for himself and also a mosque. When the mosque was under construction, the 'Ulama of the city raised a storm of opposition to the effect that the mosque was not exactly aligned towards the Qibla. He remained unconcerned about this opposition and objection. When the mosque was complete he invited the 'Ulama, Sufis, saints, and leading citizens to it and they all offered prayers behind him. After the prayers were over, he addressed all those present, saying: "People have expressed doubt concerning the alignment of the mosque. I request you to close your eyes and meditate and then decide whether it is correct or not." Thereafter he meditated and the curtains were removed from the eyes of the people. All of them saw that the sacred Ka'ba was before their eyes and that the mosque direction had been correctly aligned.

He spent the rest of his days there guiding, teaching, and inspiring the people and preaching and propagating the doctrine

of truth. Thousands of unlettered persons became Alims, hoards of people accepted Islam, the misguided began to follow the Path, the insane recovered reason and sanity, the imperfect became perfect (in knowledge) and the sinners became virtuous under the influence of Hazrat Ali Hujwiri (ra).

One of the earlier converts was one Rai Raju, the Naib (Viceroy) of Lahore during the time of Sultan Maudood. On conversion to Islam he was named Sheikh Hindi. His descendants have been since that time the custodians of the mausoleum.

PASSING ON

Hazrat Ali Hujwiri (ra) is said to have passed away on the twentieth of the month of Rabi-ul-Awwal 465 AH although the date, month and year are all conjectural. Others have estimated his passing on to have occurred between 481 AH and 500 AH.

His Urs takes place on the twentieth and the twenty-first of Safar every year.

RESPECT OF GREAT SUFIS TOWARDS HAZRAT ALI HUJWIRI (RA)

KHWAJA MU'IN AL-DIN CHISHTI (RA)

Khwaja Mu'in al-Din Chishti (ra), the great saint of Ajmer, came to Lahore to meditate for forty days at the sacred alter of Hazrat Ali Hujwiri (ra) and after receiving spiritual enlightenment; Khwaja Mu'in al-Din Chishti (ra) expressed his gratitude and out

of love and devotion uttered the following couplet whilst in an ecstatic trance:

"Ganj Bakhsh-e faiz-e aalam, mazhar-e nur-i Khuda
Naqisaan ra pir-e kaamil, kaamilaan ra rahnuma."

An attempted translation of this inspiring couplet:

"The giver of bounties, the benefactor of the world [and] manifestation of the light of God,
To the imperfect, a perfect spiritual guide, and to the perfect, a guide."

It is from this time that Hazrat Ali Hujwiri (ra), came to be known as Data Ganj Bakhsh (The Master Who Bestows Treasures/Bounties).

SHEIKH ABD AL-QADIR AL-JILANI (RA)

It is stated that Sheikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (ra) during one of his gatherings said,

"I, Abdul Qadir, would have taken him as my Spiritual Guide if I was born in his time."

Sheikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (ra) also stated,

"Data Ganj Bakhsh is a lion of Sufism and one must go to him with utmost respect."

WORKS

KASHF AL-MAHJUB

Kashf al-Mahjub (Revelation of Mystery) is held in high esteem as the first important treatise on Sufism. Hazrat Ali Hujwiri (ra) was a prolific writer, perceptive and discriminating in his choice of topics.

Kashf al-Mahjub was written in response to the request of his fellow townsman Hazrat Abu Saeed Hujwiri (ra) who put the following questions to him:

- Explain the true meaning of the Path of Sufism.
- Explain the nature of the stations' (maqamat) of the Sufis, their doctrines and sayings and make clear their mystical allegories.
- Explain how the love of Allah and ecstasy overwhelm the hearts.
- Explain why the intellect is incapable to perceive the reality of the Truth.
- Explain why the nafs (lower soul) is reluctant to attain the proximity of the Truth and how the spirit gets enrichment and life thereof.
- Explain the doctrine, sayings and the practical aspects of Sufism which are connected with these theories.

Hazrat Ali Hujwiri (ra) starts the reply with the following, regarding the current status of Sufism:

"Sufism is obsolete in our age and particularly in this country (India) where majority of the people is captivated with worldly lust. They have turned away their faces from being satisfied with the decree of the Truth. The divines and those who pretend to have knowledge of the path have formed a conception of Sufism which is conflicting to its basics."

The object of the book seems to set forth a complete system of Sufism, and the author's attitude throughout remains that of a teacher instructing a student.

It will not be a boasting opinion to mention Kashf al-Mahjub as the primary source on the laws of mysticism. It elaborates all the stages of the Path of Sufism in such a manner that in the words of the author the seeker studying and following the book would not need the auspicious guidance of a Sheikh (spiritual guide). He has touched upon the doctrines held by the different sects of Sufis, in which he enumerates special doctrine of each.

The work has always been applauded by majority of the theologians and Sheikhs representing different schools of thought and it has been always a source of excellent guidance to the seekers of the Path. It leads one to straight path and mind of the seeker is enlightened with the purity of Shariat and reality of the Truth and he feels independent of any doubt or uncertainty.

The great saint Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya (ra) said regarding the book:

"…One who does not have a Sheikh may study the Kashf al-Mahjub, [not only will he receive guidance but eventually] through the blessing that God has kept in this book, one will find one's Sheikh."

OTHER WORKS

Hazrat Ali Hujwiri (ra) wrote a few more books but he himself mentions in Kashf al-Mahjub that they were stolen by other people. He says:

"I have already written few books on this subject, but all these efforts of mine went in vain as some pretenders picked out selected passages from them to impress their followers as it was their work and they destroyed rest of the works. This sort of people considers such sadism and denial as Allah's blessing. Some did occupy themselves willingly but failed to gain anything from it. Some gained the knowledge of works, but did not comprehend the meaning. Such people only like the expressions thereof and think that the memorization and copying of such expression is the Sufism. This is their misfortune."

QUOTES & TEACHINGS

1. Every good and evil that happens to man is decreed by God.

2. Implore God to deliver you from the wickedness of your soul.

3. Whosoever refrains his soul from lust, verily Paradise shall be his abode.

4. The spiritual path is hard to travel except for those who were created for the purpose.

5. God alone can help a man to do good deeds.

6. All humans action and inaction is the act and creation of God.

7. In our time the science of Sufism is desolate.

8. The people are occupied with following their lusts and have turned their back on the path of spiritualism.

9. Blind conformity had taken the place of spiritual enthusiasm.

10. The universe is an abode of Divine mysteries, which are deposited in created things.

11. Substances, accidents, elements, bodies, forms and properties – all these are veils of Divine mysteries.

12. Man, enamoured of his gross environment, remains sunk is ignorance and apathy, making no attempt to cast off the veil that has fallen upon.

13. The animal soul is the greatest of all veils between God and man.

14. Knowledge without action is not knowledge.

15. The highest pinnacle of knowledge is expressed in the fact that without it none can know God.

16. The Divine knowledge penetrates what is hidden and comprehends what is manifest.

17. It behoves the seeker to contemplate God in every act, knowing that God sees him and all that he does.

18. Knowledge of God is the science of gnosis; knowledge from God is the science of the sacred Law; and knowledge with God is the science of the Sufi path.

19. Humanity is the greatest barrier that separates man from Divinity.

20. Poverty has a form and an essence. Its form is destitution and indigence, but its essence is fortune and free choice.

21. The glory of poverty is this, that the poor man's body is divinely preserved from base and sinful acts, and his heart from evil and contaminating thoughts.

22. The affliction of poverty is a sign of presence, while the delight of riches is a sign of 'absence'.

23. Dervishhood in all its meanings is a metaphorical poverty, and amidst all its subordinate aspects, there is a transcendent principle.

24. The term 'Sufi' has no derivation answering to etymological requirements inasmuch as Sufism is too exalted to have any genus from which it might be derived.

25. The essence of Sufism involves the annihilation of human qualities.

26. Since Sufism consists in turning away from mankind, it is necessarily without form.

27. The Sufi is entirely present: his soul is where his body is, and his body where his soul is, and his soul where his foot is, and his foot where his soul is.

28. Formerly the practice of Sufism was known and the pretence unknown; nowadays the pretence is known and the practice is unknown.

29. It is the inward glow that makes the Sufi, not the religious dress.

30. This world is the abode of trouble, the pavilion of affliction, the den of sorrow, the house of parting, and the cradle of tribulation.

31. The Sufi Sheikhs are physicians of men's souls.

32. The saints of God attain to a place where place no longer exists, where all degrees and stations disappear and where outward expressions fall off from the underlying realities.

33. Our religion takes the middle course between free will and predestination.

34. Whoever bows his head with humility, like a servant, God will exalt his state in both worlds.

35. Acquiescence is a characteristic of God's friends, while hypocrisy is a characteristic of His enemies.

36. Divine guidance involves self-mortification without which contemplation is unattainable.

37. Knowledge and action cannot be divorced in any way, just as the light of the sun cannot be separated from the sun itself.

38. Lust is our shackle, and sin is our chain.

39. Any one, who pretends to know God without lowliness and fear, is an ignorant fool, not a gnostic.

40. Human nature is more prone to ignorance than to knowledge.

41. Knowledge is a Divine attribute and action is a human attribute.

42. Ordinary people seek indulgences to keep themselves within the pale of the sacred law, but the elect practice self-mortification to feel the fruit thereof in their hearts.

43. In the mystic path, he who says 'I have arrived' has gone astray.

44. A man is united to God when God holds him in honour, and separated from God when God holds him in contempt.

45. The way to God is like the blazing sun.

46. The food of the dervish is ecstacy, his clothing is piety, and his dwelling place is the Unseen.

47. God preserves His saints in all circumstances from the guiles of the Satan.

48. Learning is not learning unless it is practiced, and gnosis is not unless it has reality.

49. Covetousness renders the dervish ignominious in both worlds.

50. Love is an attribute of the beloved; therefore no explanation of its real nature is possible.

51. Knowledge of God requires abandonment of forethought, and abandonment of forethought is resignation.

52. The heart is the seat of the knowledge of God and is more venerable than the Kaaba.

53. Men are ever looking to the Kaaba, but God is ever looking to the heart.

54. The corruption of the divines consists in covetousness, that of the princes in injustice, and that of the dervishes in hypocrisy.

55. The friends of God behold in every gift and benefit the Giver and the Benefactor.

56. Ignorant Sufis are the vilest creatures of God; just as wise Sufis are the noblest.

57. Do not trouble yourself with destiny, for what is destined from eternity will not be changed by your efforts.

57. When you are reconciled to God in affliction, you see only the Author of affliction, and the affliction itself does not come.

58. If you are not reconciled to God, when affliction comes, your heart is filled with anguish.

59. God having predestined our satisfaction and dissatisfaction does not alter His predestination; therefore our satisfaction with His decrees is a part of our pleasure.

60. Essences are not capable of annihilation; attributes, however, can be annihilated.

61. A man's attributes veil him from God.

62. When a man sees God's choice and abandons his own choice, he is delivered from all sorrow.

63. Gnosis is realized when its true nature is divinely revealed.

64. Gnosis when sought by effort is a shackle and a veil.

65. When a man is satisfied with God's decrees, it is a sign that God is satisfied with him.

66. The perfection of the state of the intoxicated man is sobriety.

67. Eternal life is gained by spiritual sacrifice and by renunciation of self-interest in fulfilling God's commandments.

68. Seeking is the cause of finding, but finding is the cause of seeking.

69. Mortification stands in the same relation to contemplation as Divine blessing to obedience.

70. There can be no contemplation without mortification.

71. When you have obtained knowledge of the lower soul, you recognize that it can be controlled by discipline, but that its essence and substance do not perish.

72. The purpose of mortifying the lower soul is to destroy its attributes, not to annihilate its reality.

73. The lust of the eye is sight, that of the ear is hearing, that of the nose is smell, that of the tongue is speech, that of the palate is taste, that of the body is touch, and that of the mind is thought.

74. When a person resigns himself to God, God protects him, and through God's protection he comes nearer to annihilating the evil than he does through self-mortification.

75. Unless Divine protection is predestined to a man, he cannot abstain from anything by his own exertion.

76. Unless God exerts Himself towards a man, that man's exertion is of no use.

77. Religion is the root and Sufism is the branch.

78. God had saints whom He has distinguished by His friendship.

79. God has caused the prophetic evidence to remain down to the present day and has made the saints the means whereby it is manifested.

80. God had made the saints the Governors of the universe.

81. To covet this world is to turn away from God for the sake of that which is transitory, and to covet the next world is to turn away from God for the sake of that which is everlasting.

82. That which is transitory perishes and its renunciation becomes naught, but that which is everlasting cannot perish, hence its renunciation is also imperishable.

83. A miracle is a token of saint's veracity, and it cannot be manifested to an imposter except as a sign that his pretensions are false.

84. The pre-eminence of the prophets depends on their exalted rank and not their being preserved from the defilement of sin, not on miracles or acts which violate custom.

85. The miracles of a saint confirm the evidence of the prophet.

86. Mujizat involve publicity; karamat secrecy.

87. The saints are witnesses to the truth of the prophet's mission.

88. Miracles and saintship are Divine gifts, not things acquired by man.

89. The ascension of prophets takes place outwardly and in the body, whereas that of the saints takes place inwardly and in the spirit.

90. Saintship is a divine mystery which is revealed only through conduct.

91. A saint is known only to a Saint.

92. Whoever is annihilated from his own will subsists in the will of God.

93. God has eternal attributes, which are peculiar to Him, and subsist through Him.

94. When the Divine omnipotence manifests its dominion over humanity, it transports a man out of his own being, so that his speech becomes the speech of God.

95. Unification is a mystery revealed by God to His servants, and it cannot be expressed in words.

96. Prayer requires purification of the body; gnosis requires purification of the heart.

97. Love is a Divine gift; not anything that can be acquired.

98. Hunger sharpens the intelligence and improves the mind and health.

99. Although hunger is an affliction to the body, it illumines the heart, purifies the soul, and leads the spirit into the presence of God.

100. When food is withheld from the lower soul, it grows weak, the reason gains strength, and the mysteries and evidences of God become more visible.

101. The fruit of hunger is contemplation of God.

102. The true object of pilgrimage is not to visit the Kaaba, but to obtain contemplation of God.

103. He who is most sincere in self-mortification is most firmly grounded in contemplation, for inward contemplation is connected with outward mortification.

104. God is not finite that the imagination should be able to define Him or that the intellect should comprehend His nature.

105. Marriage is proper for those who prefer to associate with mankind, and celibacy is an ornament for those who seek retirement from mankind.

106. There is no flame of lust that cannot be extinguished by strenuous effort, because when vice proceeds from yourself, you possess the instrument that will remove it.

107. Water flows in the river bed, but when it reaches the ocean it ceases to flow and changes its taste, so that those who desire water avoid it, but those who desire pearls dive into it.

108. God annihilates the souls of those who love Him by revealing His Majesty, and endows their hearts with everlasting life by revealing His Beauty.

109. Contemplation is this world resembles vision of God in the next world.

110. Faith and gnosis are love, and obedience is a sign of love.

111. Dancing has no foundation either in the religious law or in the mystic path.

112. Audition should not be practiced until it comes of its own accord; one should not make a habit of it but should practice it seldom.

Hazrat Bahauddin Naqshband

Order: Naqshbandi

Madhab: Hanbali

Born: Muharram 717 AH / March 1389 AD Qasr al-Arifan, Bukhara (present-day Uzbekistan)

Passed away: 791 AH/1391 AD

Resting place: Qasr al-Arifan

Hazrat Muhammad Bahauddin Shah Naqshband is a 14th century Central Asian Sufi saint after whom the Naqshbandi order takes its name. The name Naqshband is sometimes understood in connection with the craft of embroidering, and Hazrat Bahauddin is said to have in fact assisted his father in weaving cloaks (Kimkha) in Bukhara. More commonly, however,

it is taken to refer to the fixing of the divine name of God to the heart by means of Dhikr.

To the people of Bukhara, whose patron saint he became, he was known posthumously as Khwadja-yi Bala-gardan ("The Averter of Disaster"), referring to protective powers bestowed on him during his training period. Elsewhere, especially in Turkey, he is popularly called Shahi Naqshband.

In his youth he experienced visionary revelations and before the age of 20 was recognized as a brilliant Islamic scholar. He is said to have received training through the spirit (ruhaniyat) of earlier masters of the lineage including Hazrat Abdul Khaliq al-Ghujdawani, the well-known Khalifa of Hazrat Yusuf al-Hamdani and by Hazrat Khidr (Alayhis Salaam).

EARLY LIFE

Hazrat Bahauddin was born in the month of Muharram in 717 AH/ 1317 AD, in the village of Qasr al-Hinduwan (later renamed Qasr al-Arifan) near Bukhara in what is today Uzbekistan. From a young age, he was gifted with spiritual abilities.

Hazrat Muhammad Baba as-Samasi, the fifth descendant of Hazrat Yusuf al-Hamdani and a great Shaykh in his own right, once passed the village of Qasr al-Arifan and said, "I sense the scent of a Spiritual Knower who will appear here and after whose name this entire Order will be known." After passing the village on another occasion, he said, "I sense the scent so strongly that it is as if the Knower has now been born."

Three days passed, and the grandfather of the child came to the shaykh and presented him his grandson. The shaykh announced to his followers:

"This child is the knower that I told you about. I see that he is to be a guide of all humanity. His secrets are going to reach every sincere and pious person. The heavenly knowledge that God is going to shower upon him will reach every house in Central Asia. God's name shall be engraved (Naqsh) on his heart. And the Order will take its name from this engraving."

SPIRITUAL TRAINING

At the age of 18, Hazrat Bahauddin was sent by his grandfather to the village of Samas to serve the Shaykh. Of his initial noviciate under Hazrat as-Samasi, he relates:

"I would arise early, three hours before the prescribed dawn prayer, make ablution, and after performing
the Sunnah (customary) prayers, I would go into prostration, supplicating to God with the following prayer: "O my Lord, give me the power to carry the difficulties and the pain of Your love." Then I would pray the dawn prescribed prayer with the shaykh.

On his way out one day he looked at me and said, as if he had been with me when I made that supplication, "O my son, you have to change the method of your supplication. Instead say, 'O God, grant Your pleasure to this weak servant.' God does not like His servants to be in difficulties. Although God in His Wisdom

might give some difficulties to His servants to test them, the servant must not ask to be in difficulties. This would not be respectful to your Lord."

Hazrat as-Samasi assigned Hazrat Bahauddin's future spiritual training to his own principal murid, Khwaja Amir Kulal. Hazrat Kulal was Hazrat Bahauddin's immediate predecessor in the Silsila, for it was he who transmitted to him the essentials of the Sufi Path. Of this, Hazrat Bahauddin narrates:

"When Shaykh Muhammad Baba as-Samasi died, my grandfather took me to Bukhara and I married there. I lived in Qasr al-Arifan, which was God's special care to me because I was near Sayyid Amir Kulal. I stayed in his service and he told me that Shaykh Muhammad Baba as-Samasi had told him a long time ago that he would not be happy with him if was not to take good care of me.

One day, I was sitting with a friend in seclusion when the heavens opened and a grand vision came to me, and I heard a voice saying, "Is it not enough for you to leave everyone and to come to Our Presence Alone?" This voice reduced me to a state of trembling, causing me to run away from that house. I ran to a river. I threw myself in it. I washed my clothes and prayed two rakats in a way that I had never prayed before, feeling as if I was praying in the Divine Presence. Everything was opened to my heart in a state of unveiling. The entire universe disappeared and I was not aware of anything other than praying in His Presence.

At the beginning of my state of attraction, I had been asked, "Why are you going to enter on this Path?"

I answered, "In order that whatever I say and whatever I want will happen."

I was answered, "That will not be. Whatever We say and whatever We want is what will happen."

I said, "I cannot do that. I must be permitted to say and to do whatever I like, or I do not want this Way."

Then I received the answer, "No, it is whatever We want to be said and whatever We want to be done that must be said and done."

I said again, "Whatever I say and whatever I do is what must be."

Then I was left alone for fifteen days, until I was overwhelmed with a tremendous depression.

Finally I heard a voice, "O Bahauddin, whatever you want, We will grant." I was overjoyed.

I said, "I want to be given a Path that will lead anyone who travels on it straight to the Divine Presence."

I experienced a great vision and heard a voice saying, "You are granted what you have asked."

SPIRITUAL CHAIN

His spiritual chain is traced back to the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) as follows:

- Hazrat Bahauddin Naqshband, disciple of

- Hazrat Amir Kulal, disciple of
- Hazrat Muhammad as-Samasi, disciple of
- Hazrat Ali ar-Ramitani, disciple of
- Hazrat Mahmoud al-Anjir al-Faghnawi, disciple of
- Hazrat Arif ar-Riwakri, disciple of
- Hazrat Abdul Khaliq al-Ghujdawani, disciple of
- Hazrat Abul Abbas al-Khidr, disciple of
- Hazrat Yusuf al-Hamadani, disciple of
- Hazrat Abu Ali al-Farmadi, disciple of
- Hazrat Abul Hassan al-Kharqani, disciple of
- Hazrat Bayazid Bastami, disciple of
- Hazrat Jafar as-Sadiq , disciple of
- Hazrat Qasim ibn Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr, disciple of
- Hazrat Salman al-Farsi, disciple of
- Hazrat Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, disciple of
- Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)

LOVE FOR HIS SHAYKH

He goes on to narrate:

"Once I was in a state of Divine attraction and in a state of absent-mindedness, moving from here to there, not aware of what I was

doing. My feet were torn and bleeding from thorns when darkness fell. I felt myself attracted to the house of my shaykh, Sayyid Amir Kulal. It was a pitch black night with no moon or stars showing. The air was very cold and I had nothing on but an old leather cloak. When I arrived at his house, I found him sitting with his followers. When he saw me he told them, "Take him out; I do not want him in my house."

They put me out, and I felt that my ego was trying to overcome me and that it was taking over my heart and my feelings, trying to poison my trust in my shaykh. At that point, God's Divine Care and His Mercy were my only support in carrying this humiliation in the cause of God and the cause of my shaykh. I said to my ego, "I will not allow you to poison my trust in my shaykh."

I felt so tired and so depressed that I put the state of humbleness at the door of pride, placed my head on the threshold of the door of my teacher, and took an oath that I would not remove it until he accepted me again. The snow was beginning to fall and the frigid air penetrated my bones causing me to tremble in the dark night. There was not even the warmth of the moon to comfort me. I remained in that state until I nearly froze. But the love that was inside my heart, the love for the Divine and the love for the door of the Divine, my shaykh, kept me warm.

Dawn came and my shaykh stepped out of his door without seeing me physically. He put his foot on my head, which was still on his threshold. On sensing my head, he immediately withdrew his foot, took me inside his house and said to me, "O my son you have been adorned with the dress of happiness. You have been adorned with the dress of Divine Love. You have been adorned

with a dress with which neither my shaykh nor myself has been adorned. God is happy with you. The Prophet ﷺ is happy with you. All the shaykhs of the Golden Chain are happy with you."

Then, with great care and delicacy, he pulled the thorns from my feet and washed my wounds. At the same time he poured into my heart such knowledge that I had never experienced before. This opened for me a vision in which I saw myself entering into the secret of "Muhammadun Rasul Allah" I saw myself entering into the secret of the verse that is the Reality of Muhammad ﷺ. This led me to enter the secret of "La ilaha il-Allah" which is the secret of the Uniqueness of God. This then led me to enter the secrets of God's Names and Attributes that are expressed by the secret of Oneness of God. Those states cannot be put into words, but can only be known through taste that is experienced in the heart.

MEETING WITH HAZRAT ABDUL KHALIQ AL-GHUJDAWANI

During his discipleship with Hazrat Amir Kulal, Hazrat Bahauddin had a vision in which he saw his six predecessors in the silsila, beginning with Hazrat Abdul Khaliq al-Ghujdawani. This vision amounted to a second initiation, as Hazrat al-Ghujdawani enjoined on Hazrat Bahauddin, among other things, the exclusive practice of silent *dhikr*, as opposed to the vocal dhikr in which Hazrat Amir Kulal and his circle customarily engaged in.

He narrates his experience:

"In the beginning of my travel on the Way, I wandered at night from one place to another in the suburbs of Bukhara. I visited cemeteries by myself in the darkness of the night, especially in the wintertime, to learn a lesson from the dead. One night I was led to visit the grave of Shaykh Ahmad al-Kashghari and to recite Surah al-Fatiha for him. When I arrived, I found two men, whom I had never met before, waiting for me with a horse. They put me on the horse and they tied two swords on my belt. They directed the horse to the grave of Shaykh Mazdakhin.

When we arrived, we all dismounted and entered the tomb and mosque of the shaykh. I sat facing the qiblah, meditating and connecting my heart to the heart of that shaykh. During this meditation, a vision was opened to me and I saw the wall facing qiblah come tumbling down. A huge throne appeared. A gigantic man, whom no words can describe, was sitting on that throne. I felt that I knew him. Wherever I turned my face in this universe I saw that man. Around him was a large crowd in which were my shaykhs, Shaykh Muhammad Baba as-Samasi and Sayyid Amir Kulal. I felt afraid of the gigantic man while at the same time I felt love for him. I had fear of his exalted presence and love for his beauty and attraction. I said to myself, "Who is that great man?"

I heard a voice among the people in the crowd saying, "This great man who nurtured you on your spiritual path is your shaykh. He looked at your soul when it was still an atom in the Divine Presence. You have been under his training. He is Shaykh Abdul Khaliq al-Ghujdawani, and the crowd you see are the caliphs who carry his great secret, the secret of the Golden Chain."

Then the shaykh began to point to each shaykh and say, "This is Shaykh Ahmad. This is Kabir al-Awliya. This is Arif Riwakri. This

is Shaykh Ali Ramitani. This is your shaykh, Muhammad Baba as- Samasi, who in his life gave you his cloak. Do you know him?" I said, "Yes."

Then he said to me, "That cloak which he gave you such a long time ago is still in your house, and with its blessing God has removed from your life many afflictions." Then another voice came and said, "The shaykh who is on the throne is going to teach you something you need while traveling on this way." I asked if they would allow me to shake hands with him. They allowed this and took the veil away and I took his hand. Then he began to tell me about wayfaring, its beginning, middle and end. He said, "You have to adjust the wick of your self in order that the light of the unseen can be strengthened in you and its secrets can be seen. You have to show constancy, and you have to be firm in the Divine Law of the Prophet ﷺ in all your states. You have to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong (3:110, 114) and keep to the highest standard of the Divine Law."

He continued, "You have to leave the dispensations of ease, throw away innovation in all its forms, and make your qiblah the Prophet's ﷺ Traditions. You have to investigate his life and the life of his Companions. Urge people to follow and to read the Quran both day and night, and to perform the prescribed prayers with all their supererogatory worship. Do not ignore even the smallest thing from what the Prophet ﷺ has shown us of deeds and good works."

Hazrat Abdul Khaliq al-Ghujdawani urged him strictly to follow the sharia and instructed him in the method of the silent dhikr. Hence his epithet al-Uwaysi, namely a Sufi "who has attained illumination outside the regular mystical path and without the

mediation and guidance of a living shaykh."

DHIKR

Following this vision, Hazrat Bahauddin added three principles of his own to the eight of the great master, Hazrat Abdul Khaliq, all relating to the dhikr. He established the silent dhikr as the normative practice of the Naqshbandis and formulated three additional principles of the tariqa:

1. Wuquf Zaniani (awareness of time): The salik must check how he spends his time and how well he concentrates his attention during the silent dhikr.
2. Wuquf Qalbi (concentration [presence] of the heart): According to one interpretation, the salik must examine his heart to make sure that it is in the state of muraqaba (surveillance) or mushahada (perception of God). This principle is almost identical to that of yad dasht (recollection).
3. Wuquf Adadi (awareness of number): The salik must be aware of how many times he has performed dhikr (although he stressed that it was not the number that counts, but rather al-wuquf al-qalbi (concentration [presence] of the heart [on God]).

Despite the resentment of other disciples, he did not leave the circle of Hazrat Amir Kulal but only absented himself whenever the vocal dhikr was practiced.

Concerning this he said: "There are two methods of dhikr; one is silent and one is loud. I preferred the silent one because it is stronger and therefore more advisable."

Regarding permission to lead a communal gathering for dhikr, he says:

"The perfected one must give the permission for the dhikr, in order to influence the one who is using it, just as the arrow from a master of archery is better than the arrow thrown from the bow of an ordinary person."

Though he never criticized nor objected to the loud dhikr, he preferred the silent dhikr.

LATER LIFE

Hazrat Kulal, for his part is said to have continued to hold his disciple in high esteem and ultimately to free him to pursue other masters:

"He [Amir Kulal] pointed to his noble chest and said: I have emptied the breasts of gnosis (irfan) for you so that the bird of your spirituality was delivered from the egg of humanity. But, the falcon of your aspiration (himma) is flying high. Therefore I give you now the permission to wander around in the land, and if the smell of gnosis reaches your nose from a Turk or a Tajik, seek it from him."

Subsequently, Hazrat Bahauddin spent seven months in the company of Mawlana Arif ad-Din Karrani, perfecting the practice of the silent dhikr underneath his guidance. He next spent two or three months with Hazrat Kutham Shaikh, a Yasawi master resident in Nakhshab.

At a later stage of his venture, he came into contact with another Yasawi dervish, Hazrat Khalil Ata, whom he had first seen in a dream and stayed in his circle for six years. Regarding his association with Hazrat Khalil, Hazrat Bahauddin relates:

"He ordered me to help the needy, and to serve the weak, and to motivate the heart of the broken-hearted. He ordered me to keep humbleness and humility and tolerance. I kept his orders and I spent many days of my life in that manner. Then he ordered me to take care of animals, to cure their sicknesses, to clean their wounds, and to assist them in finding their provision. I kept on that way until I reached the state that, when I saw an animal in the street, I would stop and make way for it."

It is said that Hazrat Khalil gained political power and became the ruler of Transoxiania for a time in 1340 AD. Later however he lost his power and was removed from his ruling position. After the fall of Hazrat Khalil, Hazrat Bahauddin experienced a revulsion against worldly success and he retired to his birthplace, resuming his spiritual career and training his own disciples, most of who came from Bukhara and its surroundings.

He left the region only three times, twice to perform the Hajj pilgrimage and once to visit Herat. There he met with the

Sultan, Mu'izz al-Din Husayn, and explained the principles of his path to him.

DEMISE

During his final days, he confined himself to his room. Multitudes of his disciples came to visit him and receive his final advice. On Monday 3 Rabi al-Awwal, 791 AH/1389 AD, prior to his demise, he ordered them to recite Surah Yasin (Chapter 36, often referred to as "the Heart of the Quran") and upon reciting the shahada (testification of faith), he passed away.

At his request, he was buried in his own garden. Through the endowments of successive rulers of Bukhara, a khanqah, madrasa, and mosque were added to his tomb site, quickly making the area a major learning and pilgrimage centre.

Hazrat Abd al-Wahhab ash-Shaarani, the spiritual pole of his time said:

"When the shaykh was buried in his grave, a window to Paradise was opened for him, making his grave a Paradise from Heaven. Two beautiful spiritual beings entered his presence and greeted him and said, 'From the time that God created us until now, we have waited for this moment to serve you.' He replied, 'I do not look to anything other than Him. I do not need you, but I need my Lord."

Surrounded by a continually expanding complex of buildings, his mausoleum in Bukhara, Uzbekistan has become a place of

pilgrimage for Muslims from all over Asia.

QUOTES & SAYINGS

1. Wilayah (sainthood) is a Divine blessing, and the saint should be aware of it so that he could express thanks to the Almighty.

2. The saint is secure due to Divine Providence. He is protected from all calamities. Miracles or supernatural power are not trustworthy.

3. The main thing is to be steadfast on one's talks and acts. The travelers of mystic path are conferred sainthood by obeying Divine commands and injunctions. There are three kinds of Sufi saints: A follower (muqallid), accomplished (kamil) and perfect infinite. The disciple should surrender himself to the will of his spiritual Guide (Pir). This is resignation (tasleem).

4. The spiritual Guide is like an experienced physician. He applies medicine according to the need of his disciple. Interference of the disciple, in this respect, would be harmful. Our method of education is in accordance with the Sunna and the practice of the companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Only His grace made us enter the gate. We have seen His gracefulness in this regard from the beginning to the end.

5. Some asked Khwaja whether his sainthood is inherited or acquired? He said: "It is spiritual perception and emotion from

the Divine attractions by the virtue which I succeeded." Someone asked: "Do you engross in loud dhikr, mystic music (sama) and retreat?" He said: "Our method is 'solitude in the crowd", (Khalwat dar anjuman) which means to remain busy in His adoration while living in society; to be busy in His invocation outwardly and inwardly; to be aware of our inmost heart and unaware of the entire phenomenal world. No mode of life is better that this in the world.

6. Our method is suhbat (companionship) of the spiritual Guide (Shaikh) and renown lies in solitude which entails woe and anguish.

7. In La ilaha, ilaha means denial of self and illallah (there is no deity but Allah) means annihilation in His Essence. And by Muhammad-ar-Rasul-ullah (Muhammad ﷺ is the Messenger of Allah) means adherence to sunna and wont of the Prophet ﷺ. The object of dhikr (remembrance) is to have access to the reality of kalima Tawhid i,e., to negate all "otherness" except God. He also said it is easy to understand sirr-e-tawhid (secret of Oneness) but it is difficult to attain secret of His gnosis (marifat).

8. One should get instruction of dhikr or recitations from an accomplished mentor (pir) so that its result is sighted. Its purpose is to get at the reality of Tawhid. There are three things which cause Gnostics to tread the Sufi Path.: Reflection and meditation (muraqaba), self-accounting (muhasbah) and contemplation (mushabada). Muraqaba means forgetting the self to concentrate on the Creator. Muhasaba means critique the self every moment

i,e., to see time is spent in His presence or absence. Mushahada means contemplation (beholding) of Divine Beauty with esoteric eyes. In the state of contraction (qabz) we behold attributes of the Majesty and in state of expansion (bast) we behold attributes of Divine Beauty.

9. In His worship, we need the body and in servitude (ubudiyyat), the body must be alleviated. No act will yield any result as long as egotism (selfhood) persists.

10. He who trusts in God, should not consider himself reliant (mutawakkil) and should conceal his reliance in occupation. We in the spiritual path chose abasement (zillat) but Allah Most High, by His providence conferred honour to us.

11. In the beginning we made ourselves 'Desired' (matlub) and others Desirers (lalib). But we have deserted this practice. The real mentor (murshid) is Allah Himself. And he who is the true seeker of Him, is sent to us by Him, and he gets what is apportioned to him.

12. Phenomenon (majaz) is a bridge to the Real. It entails all kinds of worship, whether external or internal, of acts or speech, are unreal (majaz) or metaphorical. The wayfarer cannot achieves the Reality (haqiqat) unless he transcends all of them.

13. Someone asked: "What is meant by sair-o-suluk?" He replied "it is the exhaustive knowledge of God (marifat)". He again

asked: “What is that?” He replied “To transmit (spiritual wealth) fully from what has been attained from the mukhbir-e-sadiq (Bringer of true intelligence; a title of the Holy Prophet ﷺ) in short”

14. Ardency of love essentially requires that the lover persistently remains in the quest of the beloved. The dearer is the beloved, the more woe, anguish, and afflictions will be experienced on the way to Him. On the mystic path, excellent conduct of the aspirant is that he should remain restive and uneasy in His quest.

15. Someone asked: “What is meant by ‘when Faqr is complete, it is God’?” He said it means that the being of man is annihilated and subsistence is attained in the Absolute Being, or it is passing away of individual self in Universal Being. It is a death of selfhood.

16. The kernel (grain or seed) is protected by husk (the outer shell of a seed). If the husk is disturbed, the kernel is also disturbed. Shariah is the husk, and the mystic way (tariqat) is the kernel. If a defect occurs in the observance of Shariah, the mystic path is also blurred.

17. Someone asked: “Is it generally held that wilayat (saintship) is superior to prophethood (nabuwwat)?” Khawaja replied: “No! Only wilayat of a prophet is superior to his prophethood.”

18. A person asked how it would be possible to attain conscious

awareness in prayers? He replied: “That morsel, which is lawful and is eaten with the presence of mind and attention creates Divine awareness. Besides prayers, ablution and the first Takbir (Allah-u-Akbar) should also be performed with full conscious awareness.”

19. The Sheikh must be well aware of the past, present, and future of his disciple (mureed) so that he could teach him properly. He affirmed that Sufism is entirely discipline or code of conduct. One etiquette is for God Glorified is He, second for the Prophet ﷺ, and the third for the spiritual Guide (Pir). It is incumbent on the wayfarers of mystic path to be respectful to their spiritual Guides in their presence as well as in their absence. He who has realized His divinity, nothing remains hidden from their eyes. We have become mirrors for a period of forty years; our mirrors have never made mistakes i.e. whatever the auliya Allah see, they see through their intuitive intelligence which God bestows upon them.

20. During my mystical journey, once an inner state like that of Mansur al-Hallaj appeared in my being. It was likely I might utter the same words “I am the Truth”, from my mouth which had come out of his mouth. There was gallows in Bukhara. I went twice toward it thinking that my head too deserved the same treatment i,e., crucifixion. But by the Divine Providence I crossed this station.

21. It is related that Khwaja had no male or female slaves.

Someone asked about this. He said in servanthood, there should be no masterhood (Khawjgee).

22. Someone asked: “Where does your Sufi order arrive? “He said: “Through the Sufi order (silsila) no one can arrive anywhere.”

23. Once I saw a chameleon (girgat) who was gazing upon the sun with a fixed look engrossed in the vision of its beauty. Seeing it, I too felt divine attraction in my heart and thought I should request the chameleon to intercede in His Court for me. Standing humbly, I raised my hand in supplication. The chameleon, abandoning his absorption laid on the ground facing heaven as if he was praying for me. For a long while I continued saying Aamin.

24. The mirror of each Sheikh (spiritualist) amongst the Mashaikh has two directions and my mirror has six. The mirror refers to the heart of the gnostic (arif).

25. It is not the law of this game (travelling mystic path) that whoever runs a race shall win. But only he wins who runs the race.

26. Divine mysteries are revealed to the Awliya Allah, but such mysteries are not disclosed without permission. It is said that, he who has something, conceals it and he who has nothing, publicizes it.

27. I asked one of the top most spiritualists “What is Dervishhood?” He replied: “Degredation and Hardship.”

28. Some people asked Khwaja about miracles (karamat). He said: “Our karamat is evidence that we can walk on the earth despite being overloaded by sins.”

29. Reality in the true sense is attainable after annihilation (fana). As long as creature hood (Bashariat) overwhelms, it cannot be achieved.

Hazrat Farid al-Din Attar

QUOTES & SAYINGS

1. If you are possessed of discernment joined with knowledge, seek the company of the dervishes and become one with them: associate with none but them. Love for the dervishes is the key which opens the door into Paradise and those who hate them are worthy of shame.

2. The dervish's garment is nothing but a patched robe, and he is not led astray by worldly desires and passions.

3. Until a man treads his carnal self (Nafs) underfoot, how can he find the way to the abode of God Most High?

4. The man who walks in the Path of God has no longing after fine palaces and fair gardens: in his heart is nothing but the pain of yearning love.

5. Though you build lofty palaces as high as the heavens, in the end you will come to be buried under the earth.

6. Do not be unmindful of Eternity and do not set your heart upon the transient goods of this world. Be patient in the midst of the trials and tribulations of this life and when things go well, give thanks to God Most High.

7. O you who wander willfully away from the true Path, know that he who desires the palace of the King, which is more desirable than any palace here, has but to draw near to it. It is the habitation of the soul, which abides for ever ; it is the goal of our desires, the resting-place of the heart, the seat of Truth itself.

8. The Presence of God Most High is as a mighty Ocean and the Gardens of Paradise, with all their joys, are but as the least drop in it. He Who possesses the Ocean, possesses the drop also. All that is not the Ocean is mere vanity. Since you can find the way to the Ocean itself, why do you hasten to seek a single drop of dew? Can the one who shares in the secrets of the Sun dally with a mote in its beams? When a man has become one with the Whole, what concern has he with the part? What need of the members of his body, has one who has found his soul? If you, O man, have found your reality to be one with the Whole, then contemplate

the Whole, seek out the Whole, become one with the Whole and choose for yourself the Whole.

9. The Valley of Gnosis has neither beginning nor end. No other road is like the road which is hidden therein, nor any road there like any other road there, but the traveler in the body is other than the traveler in the spirit. Soul and body are for ever in a state of deficiency or perfection according to their strength and weakness. Therefore, of necessity, the road is revealed to each one according to his capacity for that revelation. On this road, trodden by Abraham, the friend of God, how could the feeble spider be a companion to the elephant? The progress of each will be in accordance with his spiritual state. Though the gnat were to fly with all its might, could it ever equal the perfection of the wind? Since, then there are different ways of making the journey, no two birds will fly alike. Each finds a way of his own, on this road of mystic knowledge, one by means of the Mihrab and another through the idols. When the Sun of Gnosis shines forth from the heaven above, on to this most blessed road, each is enlightened according to his capacity and finds his own place in the knowledge of the Truth.

10. When that sun shines upon him, the dustbin of this world is changed for him into a rose-garden: the kernel (grain or seed) is seen beneath the husk (the outer shell of a seed). No longer does the lover see any particle of himself, he sees only the Beloved: wheresoever he looks, he sees always His Face, in every atom he beholds His dwelling-place. A hundred thousand mysteries are revealed to him from under the veil, as clearly as the sun. Yet

thousands of men are lost eternally, for one who perfectly apprehends these mysteries. He must be perfect, who would succeed in this quest, who would plunge into this fathomless sea. If the joy of its secrets be revealed to him, every moment will renew his longing for it.

11. Even if you should attain to the Throne of Glory, do not cease each moment to say: "Is there more than this?" Plunge yourself into the Sea of Gnosis, or if you cannot do that, sprinkle the dust of the road upon your head. O you who remain asleep – and it is no matter for congratulation – why do you not put on mourning? If you have not attained to the joy of union with the Beloved, at least arise and put on Signs of Mourning for your separation from Him. If you have not looked upon the Beauty of the Beloved, arouse yourself, do not sit still, but seek out those mysteries destined for you, and if as yet you do not know them, seek them out in shame.

12. Strive to acquire the mystic gnosis, so that you may learn to know God. He who truly knows God by contemplation, realizes that Eternal Life means passing away from the personal self. Without this knowledge man has no real existence: he is not worthy to approach God, nor will he attain to the goal of his desires. If you really know your self and its desires, you will know God Most High and His gifts.

13. He alone is the true gnostic who knows God, and whoever is without this knowledge is unfit to be counted among human beings. The gnostic has a heart full of sincere and constant love,

all his actions are pure and without stain. The one to whom the gift of gnosis has been given finds no place in his heart save for God alone.

14. To the gnostic, this world is of no concern, nay, more, he gives no thought to himself. Gnosis means that the gnostic passes away from himself into God. How can the one who does not completely pass away from self attain to this perfection? The gnostic is occupied neither with this world nor the next: he is not concerned with any but his Lord. Because he has died altogether to himself, he is completely absorbed in the attainment of union with God.

15. You (God) are fire, but Your fire is veiled, for in all to which You have joined Yourself, You are under a veil. You are the Breath of Life in both body and soul. You are the Water of Life to be found in every place. In every form You manifest Yourself, according to Your will; even in the dust are Your mysteries shown forth. You are the mine and do show Yourself in its jewels. You, the Creator, are seen in the creatures, Spirit shining through gross matter.

16. You are God in Absolute Unity and you dwell here in body and soul, for You are the Divine Essence dwelling in the midst of each one of us. O Lord! How glorious is the manifestation of Your Light! You are the Sought and the Seeker. Give me, I pray to You, to drink from the cup of Immortality, for You are the Cup and the Wine and Cup-bearer.

17. In the deep waters of the ocean of annihilation I would seek to be, for though I aspire to the Sun, yet, since one is powerless to attain to Your great height, I would aspire to sleep at Your feet. Behold what grief I suffer without You! But now, since I have become nothing, I know that in the end I shall attain again to my desire. I said unto Thee: "I have passed away, as I was asked to do." You said unto me: "I will bring you unto Eternal Life, as you have wished, for when you do see yourself as nothing, then will I give unto thee such an existence as you have desired."

18. Every moment now I spend in loving adoration of Another than myself. Long ago I died to mine own existence and if now I live, it is in the existence of Another. I sacrificed all tranquility and ease and renounced all hope of fame, so that I might attain to complete annihilation I laid down my life and sacrificed my soul, and all mankind became as nothing to me. Now I have arisen, and I am free from all grief of soul, for I am set free from the world of Existence and Non-Existence and I dwell beyond both. I have taken my flight from phenomenal existence to non-entity.

19. I am without body and soul and surely these are necessary to me. Without these, what am I? I am that which I was meant to be. Within myself, I have no knowledge of myself, for self-less I was meant to be. Happy is the one who has thus passed away from mortality, for passing away is the essence of abiding in immortality. This I know, that self-annihilation is a glorious thing, but that which I do not know is what I am yet to be.

20. For you there is an ascent of the soul towards the Divine Light, therefore shall your heart and soul in the end attain to union with that Light. With your whole heart and soul, seek to regain Reality, nay, seek for Reality within your own heart, for Reality, in truth, is hidden within you. The heart is the dwelling-place of that which is the Essence of the universe, within the heart and soul is the very Essence of God. Like the saints, make a journey into your self; like the lovers of God, cast one glance within. As a lover now, in contemplation of the Beloved, be unveiled within and behold the Essence. Form is a veil to you and your heart is a veil. When the veil vanishes, you will become all light.

21. Tear aside the veils of all you see in this world and you will find yourself apart in solitude with God. If you draw aside the veils of the stars and the spheres, you will see that all is one with the Essence of your own pure soul. If you will but tear aside the veil, you will become pure, as He is pure. Cast aside the veil from existence and non-existence and you will see forthwith the true meaning of God's purpose. When you have cast aside the veil, you will see the Essence and all things will be shown forth within the Essence. If you draw aside the veil from the Face of the Beloved, all that is hidden will be made manifest and you will become one with God, for then will you be the very Essence of the Divine.

22. Except You, I see nought in the two worlds, for in truth You alone dost exist in this world and in that. From everlasting You were and changeless shall be: unto eternity is Your Being and

shall be forever. O You Who made manifest both time and place, You have created both the soul of man and the universe wherein he dwells, and You cause the spheres to revolve and make the hearts of thousands to be filled with awe and amazement at Your manifestation of Yourself.

23. Now I am made one with You and from that Union my heart is consumed with rapture and my tongue is bewildered. By union, I have been merged in the Unity, I am become altogether apart from all else. I am You and You are I – nay, not I, all is altogether You. I have passed away, "I" and "You " no more exist. We have become one and I have become altogether You.

24. By union with You, I have become the perfected gnostic and now the gnostic has vanished away and I have become altogether the Creative Truth. I am free from both pride and passion and desire. I reveal the Divine Mysteries and thereby I fill the lovers of God throughout the world with amazement and a hundred thousand creatures remain astonished at me. All forms are consumed in the flames, when the candle of Union with Him is set alight and blazes up.

25. When the paintings are hidden, you will see the Painter.

26. O brother, I will tell you the mystery of mysteries. Know, then, that the painting and the Painter are one! When your faith is made perfect, you will never see yourself, except in Him.

Hazrat Fatima of Nishapur

Born: Nishapur, Khorasan (modern-day Iran)

Passed away: Circa 838 AD Near or in Mecca

Students: Hazrat Dhul-Nun al-Misri

Fatima al-Nisaburiya also known as Fatima of Nishapur or Fatima Nishapuri was a ninth century Sufi Shaykha and saint. She was the daughter of one of the nobles of Balkh and is noted for abandoning her life of luxury and willingly choosing the Sufi path. She became respected as a master of esoteric interpretation of the Quran and Tasawwuf (Sufism).

She was married to a renowned Sufi of her time, Hazrat Abu Hamid Ahmad bin Khazruya (d. 854). She was also acquainted with great Sufi saints including Hazrat Bayazid Bastami and Hazrat Abu Hafs al-Haddad, and is also credited for being the teacher of the great Hazrat Dhul-Nun al-Misri.

LIFE

Hazrat Fatima was a model of the Sufi way. Although she was at one time quite wealthy, she spent all her riches on the poor (Fuqara). During her life time, she spent most of her life traveling between Mecca and Jerusalem.

She offered herself in marriage to Hazrat Ahmad bin Khazruya, asking him to request her hand in marriage from her father. After initially refusing, he later sent her an envoy with a marriage proposal addressed to her father, who considered their engagement a Godsend. Renouncing all connection with the world, the couple lived together in seclusion. She is known to have guided her husband in religious and practical matters.

VISIT OF HAZRAT YAHYA IBN MU'ADH

When Hazrat Yahya ibn Mu'adh al-Razi was on his way to Balkh after returning from Ray to Nishapur, Hazrat Ahmad invited him to visit.

"Fatima, how should we entertain Yahya when he comes?" Ahmad asked.

She replied, "Obtain this many oxen and sheep, and prepare this quantity of sweet herbs, condiments, candles, and perfumes. Twenty donkeys should also be killed." Hazrat Ahmad said, "But what is the sense of killing donkeys?"

Hazrat Fatima then explained, "When a nobleman comes to dine, even the dogs of the neighbourhood must get a share of the feast."

OPINIONS OF GREAT SUFIS ABOUT HER

Hazrat Fatima was known for her meetings with the eminent Sufi masters of her time in circles of study and discussions on matters

of worship and Sufi knowledge.

HAZRAT ABU HAFS AL-HADDAD

Hazrat Abu Hafs al-Haddad relates that before encountering Hazrat Fatima, he had always disliked listening to women. However, after meeting her, he said "I finally saw, however, that the Almighty lends gnosis and apprehension to whomever He pleases."

HAZRAT BAYAZID BASTAMI

Hazrat Bayazid Bastami was very surprised by her spiritual prowess. He once declared:

"In my life I only encountered one real man and one real woman — Fatima of Nishapur. There was no station (on the way) about which I told her that she had not already undergone."

He also said:

"One who struggles to practice the purity of Sufism should act with a magnanimous aspiration and demeanour like that of Fatima, wife of Ahmad ibn Khazruya. Whoever would wish to see a true man disguised as a woman, let him see Fatima."

After living in seclusion for a period of time, Hazrat Fatima accompanied her husband when he went to visit Hazrat Bayazid. When they reached him, Hazrat Fatima removed her veil and conversed with Hazrat Bayazid fearlessly. This looked very odd to Hazrat Ahmad and he asked her why she had behaved disrespectfully in front of the Sheikh. She replied:

"Because you are my natural spouse, but he is my religious consort; through you I come to my desire, but through him to God. The proof is that he has no need of my society, whereas to you it is necessary."

Hazrat Fatima continued to treat Hazrat Bayazid as such until one day he observed that her hand was stained with henna and asked her why. She answered: "O Bayazid, so long as you did not see my hand and the henna I was at my ease with you, but now that your eye has fallen on me our companionship is unlawful."

Hazrat Fatima and her husband then returned and settled in Nishapur.

HAZRAT DHUL-NUN AL-MISRI

Hazrat Dhul-Nun al-Misri met Hazrat Fatima during a pilgrimage to Mecca, becoming her disciple and student. He says regarding her, "She is of the saints of God, and my teacher."

A master once asked Hazrat Dhul-Nun, "Who, in your opinion, is the highest among the Sufis?" He replied:

A lady in Mecca, called Fatima Nishapuri, whose discourse displayed a profound apprehension of the inner meanings of the Quran which were astounding.

Once in Jerusalem, Hazrat Dhul-Nun requested that Hazrat Fatima give him some words of counsel. She exhorted him, "In all your actions, watch that you act with sincerity and in opposition to your lower soul (Nafs)."

CHARACTER

Her character portrait of Hazrat Fatima shows her to be strong-willed, independent, self-confident, and very much involved in the cultural life of Sufi elites at the time. Historical narration about her seems to be impressed by these qualities and mystical capabilities.

DEMISE

Hazrat Fatima passed away while performing the Umrah pilgrimage in 838.

SAYINGS & QUOTES

When God ignores a person, he will wonder aimlessly in every city square and will prattle constantly with every tongue. When God does not ignore a person, he silences him except for the truth and compels him to hold Him in reverence and sincerity.

Whoever doesn't have God in his consciousness, is erring and in delusion, whatever language he speaks, whatever company he keeps. Yet, whoever holds God's company never speaks except with sincerity and assiduously adheres to a humble reserve and earnest devotion in his conduct.

In this day and age, a man of true spiritual honesty and piety is buffeted by an ocean whose waves distress him. His entreaty to God is to liberate him, to grant him salvation from its waves.

One who works for the vision of the Truth is a Gnostic (Arif) and whoever's conduct is based on the fact that God is constantly observing him, is a devotee.

God, through an infinite variety of subtle graces and goodness, invited people to Himself, but they did not respond to His call, so He afflicted them with diverse calamities, that by means of this torment they might return to Him, for He loves His creation.

It is far easier to overcome one's desires than to endure being abased by seeking after them.

It is related that a woman from Balkh once visited Fatima and declared, "I wish to attain nearness to God through serving you." Hazrat Fatima responded, "Why not seek proximity to me through serving God?"

Hazrat Fatima of Córdoba

Born: Córdoba, Spain

Based in: Seville, Spain

Students: Hazrat Ibn Arabi

Nunah Fatima bint ibn al-Muthanna more commonly known as Fatima of Cordoba was a twelfth centry Andalusian Sufi saint and Shaykha (spiritual guide) of the famous Hazrat Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi. Although she lived in extreme poverty and was very old when she met the young Hazrat Ibn Arabi, her beauty was that of a young woman, so replenished was she by the love of God.

LIFE

Hazrat Fatima was born in Cordoba in Spain and chose to embark on the spiritual path while still a young girl living with her family. She later moved to Seville and married a righteous man who was afflicted with leprosy, whom she happily and dutifully served for twenty-four years until he passed away.

She earned her living through hand-spinning but was soon forced to give up this profession after she injured her spinning finger. She took this as a sign and from then on lived in very impoverished circumstances, subsisting on offerings and food that had been discarded by others.

When she became hungry and had no food to eat, she would nevertheless remain cheerful and thank God for His favour in that he was subjecting her to the same circumstances to which He had subjected his prophets and saints. She would say, "Lord, how can I deserve this great position in that You treat me as You treated Your loved ones?"

SHAYKHA OF HAZRAT IBN ARABI

Hazrat Ibn Arabi was a young man when he moved to Seville with his family to receive his formal education. He studied under various masters, one of them being Hazrat Fatima whom he served for several years and had great respect for, describing her as "a mercy to the world". Despite being advanced in age when he met her, Hazrat Ibn Arabi describes her youthful appearance:

"I waited on her with all my soul for many years; at that time she was ninety-five years of age. The delicacy and freshness of her visage, however, made me ashamed to look at her. Most people who saw her thought she was fourteen years old."

Elsewhere he states:

"When I met her she was in her nineties and only ate the scraps left by people at their doors. Although she was so old and ate so little, I was almost ashamed to look at her face when I sat with her; it was so rosy and soft. Looking at her in a purely superficial way one might have thought she was a simpleton, to which she

would have replied that he who knows not his Lord is the real simpleton. She was indeed a mercy to the world."

RELATIONSHIP WITH HAZRAT IBN ARABI

She had a very caring attitude towards Hazrat Ibn Arabi and would refer to herself as his mother. He narrates:

"She used to say to me, "I am your spiritual mother and the light of your earthly mother." When my mother came to visit her, Fatima said to her, "O light, this is my son and he is your father, so treat him with filial respect and do not dislike him."

Hazrat Fatima herself reserved great respect for her student and preferred his company over that of all the contemporaries of her day who would come to see her. Hazrat Ibn Arabi relates:

"She said of me, "I have never seen the likes of that fellow. He comes to visit me with his total being, and when he departs, he goes away with his whole being, no residue of himself is left behind with me."

Elsewhere he states:

She used to say, "Of those who come to see me, I admire none more than Ibn Arabi." On being asked the reason for this she replied, "The rest of you come to me with part of yourselves, leaving the other part of you occupied with your other concerns,

while Ibn Arabi is a consolation to me, for he comes to me with all of himself. When he rises up it is with all of himself and when he sits it is with his whole self, leaving nothing of himself elsewhere. That is how it should be on the Way."

Hazrat Ibn Arabi, along with two of his companions, built a hut made of reeds for her, in which she lived until she passed away.

DEVOTION TO GOD

Hazrat Fatima was deeply devoted to God. Hazrat Ibn Arabi states, 'Although God offered to her His Kingdom, she refused, saying, "You are all, all else is inauspicious for me."

He goes on to state that he once heard her remark:

"I am surprised when people who claim to love God, the Exalted, still do not rejoice in Him, since by means of Him they behold everything and even for a blink of an eye His omniscient attention and regard is not withdrawn from them. How can these men profess love of God, and still weep?"

Due to her profound devotion, some of the believing Jinn would sit with her, seeking her companionship. However, she would refuse them and ask them to remain hidden, reminding them of what the Prophet of God ﷺ had said the night he caught the demon, "I remembered the words of my brother Sulayman (Alayhis Salaam) and used them on it."

She used to take great pleasure in playing the tambourine. When asked about this, she replied:

"I take joy in Him Who has turned to me and made me one of His Friends (Saints), using me for His own purposes. Who am I that he should choose me among men. He is jealous of me for, whenever I turn to something other than He in heedlessness, He sends me some affliction concerning that thing."

SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE & DEMISE

Hazrat Ibn Arabi relates:

"Once, on the night of the Festival, Abu Amir, the muezzin, struck her with his whip in the mosque. She gave him a look and left the place feeling very angry with him. In the morning she heard him calling to prayer and said, "O my Lord, do not rebuke me that I was affected by one who calls Your Name in the darkness of the night while other men sleep, for it is my Beloved who is mentioned on his lips. O God, do not censure him because of my feeling against him."

The next morning the jurists of the locality went, after the Festival prayer, to convey their respects to the Sultan. This muezzin, full of worldly aspiration, went in with them. When the Sultan enquired who the fellow might be, he was told that it was only the muezzin. Then the Sultan asked who had allowed him to come in with the jurists and ordered him to be thrown out, which he was. However, after someone had pleaded with the Sultan for

him he was let off, although the Sultan had intended to punish him. Fatimah heard about this incident and said, "I know about it, and if I had not prayed for leniency for him he would have been executed." Her spiritual influence was very great indeed. After this she died."

MIRACLES

Various miracles were attributed to her, as witnessed by Hazrat Ibn Arabi.

MIRACLE OF SURAH FATIHA

He came to know her lofty station when he observed that Surah Fatiha, the opening chapter of the Quran, would assist her in any task she desired to carry out. As result of her reading the chapter, she was able to remarkably create a three-dimensional ethereal image of Surah Fatiha and ask it to carry out a certain task.

He narrates:

"One day when I was with her, a woman came to see her to complain of her husband who had gone away to Sidonia, two days' journey from Seville. She told us that her husband wanted to seek another wife in that place, which she found hard to accept. I asked Fatimah whether she had heard the woman's plea and begged her to call upon God to restore her husband to her. She said, "I will make no supplication, but I will cause the chapter 'The Opening' (Al-Fatihah) to follow behind him and bring him

back." I then said, "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate", and she recited the rest of the chapter. Then she said, "O chapter of 'The Opening', go to Jerez de Sidonia to the husband of this woman and drive him back at once from wherever you find him and do not let him delay." She said this sometime between noon and the late afternoon.

On the third day the man arrived at his home. Then the woman came to inform us of his arrival and to thank us. I then told her to bring her husband to us. When he came we asked him what had brought him back from Jerez, when he had intended to marry and settle down there. He replied that he had left his house in the middle of the afternoon heading towards the municipal building for the marriage and that on the way he had felt a constriction in his heart and everything seemed suddenly very dark to him. At this he became very anxious. Then he left that place and arrived in Triana before sunset, where he had found a boat for Seville. Thus he had sailed the day before and had arrived in Seville that morning, having left all his baggage and effects behind in Jerez. He admitted that he still did not know why he had done it."

MIRACLE OF THE OIL

Hazrat Ibn Arabi narrates:

"One day I built a hut for her of palm branches in which to perform her devotions. That same night the oil in her lamp ran out, something which had never happened to her before. I never learned the secret of that from her. She got up to open the door to

ask me to bring her some more oil and, in the darkness, plunged her hand into some water in the bucket underneath her. At this she cursed and the water was immediately changed into oil. She then took the jug and filled it with the oil, lit the lamp and came back to see from where the oil had come. When she saw no further trace of oil she realized that it had been a provision from God."

Hazrat Hasan al-Basri

Born: 21 AH / 642 AD Madinah, Saudi Arabia

Passed away: 5th Rajab 110 AH / 728 AD Basra, Iraq

Resting place: Basra, Iraq

Al-Hasan ibn Abi al-Hasan al-Basri was born in Medina in 21 AH (642). His father was a freed slave of Zaid ibn Thabit, a famous companion of Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Hasan Basri was himself brought up in the house of Umm al-Mu'mineen Umm Salamah. He met many Companions of the Prophet ﷺ including, it is said, seventy of those who fought at the Battle of Badr. He grew up to become one of the most prominent figures of his generation, being famous for his uncompromising piety and outspoken condemnation of worldliness in high places. He died

in Basra in 110 (728). He was a brilliant orator. Many of his speeches and sayings are quoted by Arab authors and some of his letters are still preserved.

THE CONVERSION OF HASAN OF BASRA

The beginning of Hasan of Basra's conversion was as follows. He was a jewel merchant and was called Hasan of the Pearls. He traded with Byzantium, and dealt with the generals and ministers of Caesar. On one occasion, going to Byzantium he called on the prime minister and conversed with him a while. "We will go to a certain place," the minister told him, "if you are agreeable." "It is for you to say," Hasan replied. "I agree." So the minister commanded a horse to be brought for Hasan. He mounted with the minister and they set out. When they reached the desert Hasan perceived a tent of Byzantine brocade, fastened with ropes of silk and golden pegs, set firm in the ground. He stood to one side. Then a mighty army, all accoutered in the panoply of war, came out they circled the tent, said a few words, and departed. Philosophers and scholars to the number of near four hundred arrived on the scene, they circled the tent, said a few words, and departed. After that three hundred illumined elders with white beards approached the tent, circled it, said a few words, and departed. Thereafter more than two hundred maidens, each bearing a plate of gold and silver and precious stones, circled the tent, said a few words, and departed. Hasan relates that, astonished and filled with wonder, he asked himself what this might be.

"When we alighted," he went on, "I asked the minister. He said that the Caesar had a son of unsurpassable beauty, perfect in all the branches of learning and unrivalled in the arena of manly prowess. His father loved him with all his heart." Suddenly he fell ill" so Hasan related on the authority of the minister. All the skilled physicians proved powerless to cure him. Finally he died, and was buried in that tent. Once every year people come out to visit him. First an immense army circles the tent, and they say: "O prince, if this circumstance that has befallen thee had come about in war, we would have all sacrificed our lives for thee, to ransom thee back. But the circumstance that has befallen thee is at the hand of one against whom we cannot fight, whom we cannot challenge." This they say, and then return.

The philosophers and the scholars come forward, and say: "This circumstance has been brought about by one against whom we cannot do anything by means of learning and philosophy, science and sophistry. For all the philosophers of the world are powerless before him, and all the learned are ignorant beside his knowledge. Otherwise we would have contrived devices and spoken words which all in creation could not have withstood." This they say, and then return.

Next the venerable elders advance, and say: "O prince, if this circumstance that has befallen thee could have been set right by the intercession of elders, we would all have interceded with humble petitions, would not have abandoned thee there. But this circumstance has been brought upon thee by one against whom no mortal man's intercession profits anything." This they say, and depart.

Now the moon-fair maidens with their plates of gold and precious stones advance, circle the tent, and say: "Son of Caesar, if this circumstance that has befallen thee could have been set right by wealth and beauty, we would have sacrificed ourselves and given great moneys, and would not have abandoned thee. But this circumstance has been brought upon thee by one on whom wealth and beauty have no effect." This they say, and return.

Then Caesar himself with his chief minister enters the tent, and says: "O eye and lamp of thy father, O fruit of the heart of thy father, O dearest beloved of thy father, what is in thy father's hand to perform? Thy father brought a mighty army, he brought philosophers and scholars, intercessors and advisers, beautiful maidens, wealth and all manner of luxuries, and he came himself. If all this could have been of avail, thy father would have done all that lay in his power. But this circumstance has been brought about by one before whom thy father, with all this apparatus, this army and retinue, this luxury and wealth and treasure, is power-less. Peace be upon you, till next year!" This he says, and returns.

These words of the minister so affected Hasan that he was beside himself. At once he made arrangements to return. Coming to Basra, he took an oath never to laugh again in this world, till his ultimate destiny became clear to him. He flung himself into all manner of devotions and austerities, such that no man in his time could exceed that discipline.

HASAN OF BASRA AND ABU AMR

It is related that Abu Amr, the leading authority on the reading of the Koran, was teaching the Koran one day when suddenly a handsome boy arrived to join his class. Abu Amr gazed at the child improperly, and immediately he forgot the whole Koran, from the p of "Praise" to the n of "jinn and men". A fire possessed him, and he lost all self-control. In this state he called on Hasan of Basra and described to him his predicament. "Master," he wept bitterly, "such is the situation. I have forgotten the whole Koran." Hasan was most distressed to hear of his situation. "Now is the season of the pilgrimage," he said. "Go and perform the pilgrimage. When you have done that, repair to the mosque of Khaif. There you will see an old man seated in the prayer-niche. Do not spoil his time, but let him be until he is disengaged. Then ask him to say a prayer for you."

Abu Amr acted accordingly. Seated in a corner of the mosque, he observed a venerable elder and about him a circle of people seated. Some time passed, then a man entered, clad in spotless white robes. The people made way before him, greeted him, and conversed together. When the hour of prayer arrived, the man departed and the people departed with him, so that the elder remained alone. Abu Amr then approached and saluted him. "In Allah's name, help me," he cried. And he described his predicament. The elder, much concerned, raised his eyes to heaven. "He had not yet lowered his head," Abu Amr recounted, "When the Koran came back to me. I fell down before him for joy."

"Who recommended me to you?" the elder asked. "Hasan of Basra," Abu Amr replied. "Anyone who has an imam like Hasan," the old man commented, "what need has he of another?

Well, Hasan has exposed me. Now I will expose him. He rent my veil, and I will rend his as well. That man," he went on, "in the white robes who entered after the afternoon prayer and left before the rest, and the others did him reverence that man was Hasan. Every day he prays the afternoon prayer in Basra and then comes here, converses with me, and returns to Basra for the evening prayer. Anyone who has an imam like Hasan, why should he ask me for a prayer?"

HASAN OF BASRA AND THE FIRE-WORSHIPPER

Hasan had a neighbour named Simeon who was a fire-worshipper. Simeon fell ill and was at death's door. Friends begged Hasan to visit him; he called, to find him in bed, blackened with fire and smoke. "Fear God," Hasan counselled him. "You have passed all your life amid fire and smoke. Accept Islam, that God may have mercy on you." "Three things hold me back from becoming a Muslim," the fire-worshipper replied. "The first is, that you speak ill of the world, yet night and day you pursue worldly things. Secondly, you say that death is a fact to be faced, yet you make no preparation for death. In the third place, you say that God's face shall be seen, yet today you do everything contrary to His good pleasure."

"This is the token of those who know truly" Hasan commented. "Now if believers act as you describe, what have you to say? They acknowledge the unity of God, whereas you have spent your life in the worship of fire. You who have worshipped fire for seventy years, and I who have never worshipped fire we are both carried off to Hell. Hell will consume you and me. God will pay no

regard to you, but if God so wills, the fire will not dare so much as to burn one hair of my body. For fire is a thing created by God and the creature is subject to the Creator's command. Come now, you who have worshipped fire for seventy years; let us both put our hands into the fire, then you will see with your own eyes the impotence of fire and the omnipotence of God."

So saying, Hasan thrust his hand into the fire and held it there. Not a particle of his body was affected or burnt. When Simeon saw this he was amazed. The dawn of true knowledge began to break. "For seventy years I have worshipped fire," he groaned. "Now only a breath or two remains to me. What am I to do?" "Become a Muslim," was Hasan's reply.

"If you give it me in writing that God will not punish me," said Simeon, "then I will believe. But until I have it in writing, I will not believe." Hasan wrote it down. "Now order just witnesses of Basra to append their testimony." The witnesses endorsed the document. Then Simeon wept many tears and proclaimed the faith. He spoke his last testament to Hasan. "When I die, bid them wash me, then commit me to the earth with your own hands, and place this document in my hand. This document will be my proof."

Having charged Hasan thus, he spoke the attestation of faith and died. They washed his body, said the prayer over him, and buried him with the document in his hand. That night Hasan went to sleep pondering what he had done. "How could I help a drowning man, seeing that I am drowning myself? Since I have no control over my own fate, why did I venture to prescribe how God should act?"

With this thought he fell asleep. He saw Simeon in a dream glowing like a candle, on his head a crown, robed in fine raiment, he was walking with a smile in the garden of Paradise. "How are you, Simeon?" Hasan enquired. "Why do you ask? You can see for yourself," Simeon answered. "God Almighty of His bounty brought me nigh His presence and graciously showed me His face. The favours He showered upon me surpass all description. You have honoured your guarantee, so take your document. I have no further need of it."

When Hasan awoke, he saw that parchment in his hand. "Lord God," he cried, "I know well that what Thou doest is without cause, save of Thy bounty. Who shall suffer loss at Thy door? Thou grantest a fire-worshipper of seventy years to come into Thy near presence because of a single utterance. How then wilt Thou exclude a believer of seventy years?"

DEATH OF HASAN BASRI

The immaculate sincerity, outstanding piety and moral and spiritual excellence of Hasan Basri had earned the affection of everyone in Basra. When he passed away in 110 (AH), on 5th Rajab on a Friday at the age of 89, the entire population of Basra attended his funeral which took place on Friday, so that for the first time in the history of Basra the Jumu'ah Masjid of the city remained empty at the hour of the Asr prayer.

QUOTES & SAYINGS

1. The friends of God (Awliya) are those who renounce this world and attain true knowledge of God.

2. The wise man is he who considers this world as nothing and with this consideration he seeks the next world and does not regard the next world anything seeking His proximity.

3. One who knows God considers Him to be his friend and he who recognizes this world considers Him to be his enemy.

4. Patience is of two sort: firstly, patience in misfortune and affliction, and secondly patience to refrain from the things which God has commanded us to renounce and has forbidden us to pursue.

5. A grain of genuine piety is better than a thousand fold weight of fasting and prayer.

6. Meditation on God is the most essential quality of the lover of God since he recognizes his Pure Self and becomes conscious of his moral attainments during his concentration on the Attributes of God. Meditation is the mirror which reveals you your virtues and vices.

7. How excellent is he who takes no thought of his own interest so that his patience is for God's sake not for the saving of himself from Hell; and his asceticism is for God's sake, not for the purpose of bringing himself into Paradise. This is the mark of true

sincerity.

8. He who has attained contentment requires nothing; he who has sought retirement from the world found peace; he who has trodden his passion and lust under foot got freedom; he who has rid himself of jealousy attained friendship and he who has lived with patience for a little while, gained an eternal abode.

9. Humility is constant fear accompanying the heart.

10. Renunciation of the world is that you loathe its devotees and all its contains.

11. Seek sweetness in three things; prayer; making remembrance of God, and reciting the Holy Quran.

12. You must beautify your character i.e., cultivate moral character.

13. Learning religion, moderation in the world, and knowledge of what constitutes your duty toward God Most High.

14. A sheep is more aware than a human being, for it responds to the warning of the shepherd, but ignorant is man who disobeys the commands of the Lord and follows the behests of the devil (his lower mind).

15. Evil company degenerates the seeker.

16. Accumulating wealth is worse than drinking wine which is prohibited by the scriptures.

17. He who takes to solitude finds safety in it. And he who disowns allegiance to his carnal soul is set free.

18. He is wise who digs out the foundation of the world and builds instead the castle of other worldliness (eternity) on it.

19. Whosoever recognizes God, considers the world as his enemy and he who loves the world turns enemy of God.

20. He who gives up his spiritual practices to play the philanthropy in the world, trying to mould its evil ways, is ruined.

21. Whosoever loves silver and gold is humiliated by the Lord and he who considers himself the leader of the community is misled and belittled.

22. The Lord in the Quran says, “I shall forgive thee all thy transgressions if ye shall cast thy glances on none besides Me.”

23. Sell this present world of yours for the next world and you will gain both in entirety, but do not sell the next world for this

world, for so shall you lose the two together. Act towards this world as if it were not, and towards the world to come as if it would never cease to be. He is a wise man who regards this world as nothing, and so regarding it, seeks the other world, instead of setting at nought the other world and seeking this. Whoso knows God regards Him as a friend and whoso knows this world regards Him as an enemy.

24. He who is content, needing nothing, and who has sought solitude, apart from mankind, will find peace: he who has trodden his carnal desires underfoot, will find freedom : he who has rid himself of envy will find friendship, and he who has patience for a little while will find himself prepared for Eternity.

25. God has said: " When My servant becomes altogether occupied with Me, then I make his happiness consist in the remembrance of Myself, and when I have made his happiness and his delight consist in that remembrance, he desires Me and I desire him, and when he desires Me and I desire him, I raise the veils between Me and him and I become manifest before his eyes. These do not forget Me, when others forget."

Hazrat Ibrahim ibn Adham

Order: Unknown

Madhab: Hanafi

Born: 100 AH / 782 AD Balkh, current Afghanistan

Passed away: 165 AH / 782 AD Jableh, Syria

Resting place: Jableh, Syria

Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn Adham was born in Balkh and of Arab descent. He is one of the earliest documented great Sufis. He was a King of Balkh who renounced his throne for a spiritual kingdom and wandered to live a life of complete asceticism, earning his bread in Syria by honest manual toil until his death in c. 165 AH (782 AD). According to Arabic and Persian sources like al-Bukhari and others, Ibrahim ibn Adham received a warning from God through Hazrat Khidr who appeared to him twice, and as

such, Ibrahim abdicated his throne to take up the ascetic life in Syria. He is described in the Kashf al-Mahjub, written by Ali Hujwiri (Data Ganj Bakhsh), as "unique in this path; the chieftain of his contemporaries, and a disciple of al-Khidr."

THE LEGEND OF IBRAHIM IBN ADHAM

Ibrahim ibn Adham's was king of Balkh, and a whole world was under his command; forty gold swords and forty gold maces were carried before and behind him. One night he was asleep on his royal couch. At midnight the roof of the apartment vibrated, as if someone was walking on the roof. "Who is there?" he shouted. "A friend," came the reply. "I have lost a camel, and am searching for it on this roof.". "Fool, do you look for the camel on the roof?" cried Ibrahim. "Heedless one," answered the voice, "do you seek for God in silken clothes, asleep on a golden couch?" These words filled his heart with terror, he could not sleep any more.

When day came he returned to his throne, thoughtful, bewildered and full of care. The ministers of state stood each in his place, his slaves were drawn up in ranks. General audience was proclaimed. Suddenly a man with awful smell entered the room, so terrible to look upon that none dared ask him his name. He advanced solemnly till he stood before the throne.

"What do you want?" demanded Ibrahim.
"I have just alighted at this caravanserai," said the man.
"This is not a caravanserai. This is my palace. You are mad," shouted Ibrahim.

"Who owned this palace before you?" asked the man.
"My father," Ibrahim replied.
"And before him?"
"My grandfather."
"And before him?"
"So-and-so."
"And before him?"
"The father of So-and-so."
"Where have they all departed?" asked the man.
"They have gone. They are dead," Ibrahim replied.
"Then is this not a caravanserai which one man enters and another leaves?"

With these words the stranger vanished. He was Khidr, upon whom be peace. The fire blazed more fiercely in Ibrahim's soul. Ibrahim commanded for his horse to be saddled and thought that if he would go hunting this would take his mind off all of this. His horse was saddled and he proceeded with his troops. He galloped across the desert. It was as if he did not know what he was doing. In this state he became separated from his troops. He then heard a voice "Awake!" He pretended that he did not hear it, and rode on. A second time the voice commanded, but he did not listen to it. A third time he heard the same, and hurled himself further away. Then the voice sounded a fourth time. "Awake, before you are stricken awake!" He now lost all self-control. At that moment a deer came in front of him, and Ibrahim decided to chase it. Suddenly the deer spoke to him and said "I have been sent to hunt you. You cannot catch me. Was it for this that you were created, or is this what you were commanded?"

Ibrahim cried "What is happening to me?" and he turned his face from the deer. He then heard the same words from the top of his saddle. He now was terrified. The revelation became clearer yet, for Almighty God willed to complete the transaction. A third time the voice came from the collar of his cloak. The revelation was thus consummated, and the heavens were opened unto him.

Faith was now established in him. He dismounted all. His garments, and the horse itself, were dripping with his tears. He made true and sincere repentance. As he turned aside from the road, he saw a shepherd wearing felt clothes and a hat of felt, driving his sheep before him. Looking closely, he saw that he was a slave of his. He bestowed on him his gold embroidered cloak and bejeweled cap, together with the sheep, and took from him his clothes and hat of felt. These he put on himself.

IBRAHIM IBN ADHAM GOES TO MECCA

Ibrahim spend fourteen years crossing the desert, praying and humbling himself all the way. When he drew near to Mecca, the elders of the Haram hearing of his approach came out to meet him. He moved himself ahead of the caravan so that no one might recognize him. The servants preceded the elders, and they saw Ibrahim going ahead of the caravan, but not having seen him before, they did not recognize him. As they walked passed him, they shouted, "Ibrahim ibn Adham is near. The elders of the Haram have come out to meet him."

"What do you want of that heretic?" Ibrahim demanded. Straightway they set upon him and beat him up. "The elders of

Mecca go out to meet him, and you call him a heretic?" they shouted. "I say he is a heretic," Ibrahim repeated. When they left him, Ibrahim turned to himself.

"Ha!" he cried. "You wanted the elders to come out to meet you. Well, you have collected a few punches. Praise be to God that I have seen you get your wish!" Ibrahim then took up residence in Mecca. A circle of companions formed around him, and he earned his bread by the labour of his hands, working as a carpenter.

IBRAHIM AT MECCA IS VISITED BY HIS SON

When Ibrahim ibn Adham left Balkh he left behind him a son. When his son grew he asked his mother one day about his father. His mother advised that his Father is lost. The son the requested that all who desired to perform the pilgrimage should assemble. Four thousand people presented themselves. He gave them all their expenses to cover provisions and camels and led the party to Mecca, hoping that God might grant him sight of his father. Reaching Mecca, he encountered by the door of the Holy Mosque a party of patchwork-frocked Sufis.

The son asked them wether they knew Ibrahim bin Adham and the Sufis replied "He is a friend of ours," they told him. "He is entertaining us, and has gone to hunt for food." The son asked them to direct him, and he went in his track. He saw his father unshod and bareheaded coming along with a load of firewood. Tears sprang to his eyes, but he controlled himself and followed

his father to the market. There his father began to shout. “Who will buy goodly things for goodly things?” A baker called to him and took the firewood in exchange for bread. Ibrahim brought the bread and laid it before his companions. Witnessing all of this the son thought that if he would say who he was his father would run away as he had ran away before. He went to ask for advice from his mother. His mother advised him to wait until they performed circumambulation of the holy house of God.

When the pilgrims entered Mecca and made the circumambulation of the Kaaba, Ibrahim with his companions also circled the Holy House. A boy approached him, and Ibrahim looked at him keenly. His friends noticed this, but waited until they had finished the circumambulation. They Asked Ibrahim who this boy was. Ibrahim advised “When I left Balkh, I left a suckling son. I know that the boy is that son.”

The next day one of his friends went to look for the caravan from Balkh. As he came closer to it, he saw in the midst of the caravan a tent pitched. In the tent a throne was set, and the boy was seated on the throne, reciting the Koran and weeping. Ibrahim’s friend asked if he might enter. “Where do you come from?” he enquired. “From Balkh,” the boy replied. “Whose son are you?” The boy put his hand to his face and began to weep. “I have never seen my father, “he said. “Not until yesterday. I do not know whether it was he or not. I am afraid that if I speak he will run away, as he ran away from us before. My father is Ibrahim ibn Adham the King of Balkh.

The man took him to bring him to Ibrahim. His mother also went along with him. As soon as she saw Ibrahim she cried aloud and could not control herself. “This is your father.” she said. All the

bystanders and friends of Ibrahim bursted into tears. As soon as the boy recovered himself he saluted his father. Ibrahim returned his greeting and took him to his breast. Then Ibrahim would have departed, but the boy would not let go of him. His mother wailed aloud. Turning his face to heaven, Ibrahim cried, "O God, Come to my assistance!" The boy immediately died. When his companions asked Ibrahim about what happened he advised.

"When I took him to my breast, love for him stirred in my heart. A voice spoke to me, "Ibrahim, you claim to love Me, and you love another along with Me? Have you attached your heart to that woman and child?" When I heard this, I prayed, "Lord of Glory, come to my assistance! He will so occupy my heart that I shall forget to love Thee. Either take away his life or mine." His death was the answer to my prayer."

THE LIFE OF IBRAHIM BIN ADHAM

Ibrahim bin Adham was once asked "Since you entered on this path, have you ever experienced happiness?" to which he replied "Several times."

"Once I was on board ship and the captain did not know me. I was wearing ragged clothes and my hair was untrimmed, I was in a spiritual ecstasy of which all on board were unaware. They laughed at me and ridiculed me. There was a joker on the ship, and every now and then he would come and grab me by the hair and pluck it out and slap me on the neck. In those moments I felt

that I had attained my desire, and was very happy to be so humiliated."

"Suddenly a great wave arose, and all feared that they would perish. 'We must throw one of these fellows overboard,' cried the helmsman. 'Then the ship will be lighter.' They seized me to throw me into the sea. The wave subsided, and the ship resumed an even keel. That moment when they took me by the ear to throw me into the water, I felt that I had attained my desire, and was happy."

"On another occasion I went to a mosque to sleep there. They would not let me be, and I was so weak and exhausted that I could not get up. So they seized me by the foot and dragged me out. The mosque had three steps; my head struck against each step in turn, and the blood flowed forth. I felt that I had attained my desire. On each step that they dropped me, the mystery of a whole clime became revealed to me. I said, 'Would that the mosque had more steps, to increase my felicity!'"

"On another occasion I was wrapped in a state of ecstasy. A joker came and urinated on me. Then too I was happy."

"On yet another occasion I was wrapped in a fur jacket infested by fleas which devoured me unmercifully. Suddenly I remembered the fine clothes which I had deposited in the treasury. My soul cried within me, 'Why, what pain is this?' Then too I felt that I had attained my desire."

Ibrahim was travelling in the desert one day when he was stopped by a soldier. "What are you?" the soldier asked. Ibrahim replied that he was a servant. The soldier asked him where the nearest habitation was. Ibrahim pointed to the graveyard. "You

are making fun of me," shouted the soldier, lashing out at Ibrahim's head. His head was broken, and the blood gushed forth. The soldier put a rope round Ibrahim's neck and dragged him along. People from the nearby town stopped at the spectacle.

"Ignoramus, this is Ibrahim ibn Adham, the friend of God," they cried. The soldier fell at Ibrahim's feet and implored him to pardon him and acquit him of the wrong he had done him. "You told me you were a servant," he pleaded. "Who is there who is not a servant?" Ibrahim replied. "I broke your head, and you prayed for me," said the soldier. "I prayed that you might be blessed for the way you treated me," was Ibrahim's answer. "My reward for the way you treated me was Paradise, and I did not wish that your reward should be Hell." "Why did you direct me to the cemetery when I asked the way to habitation?" the soldier asked. "Because every day the graveyard becomes more thronged, and the city more deserted," answered Ibrahim.

One day Ibrahim came to a well. He let down the bucket, and it came up full of gold. He emptied it and let it down again, and it came up full of pearls. In merry mood he emptied it once more. "O God," he cried, "Thou art offering me a treasury. I know that Thou art all-powerful, and Thou knowest that I shall not be deluded by this. Give me water, that I may make my ablution."

DEMISE OF IBRAHIM BIN ADHAM

Hazrat Ibrahim bin Adham attained unity with the Beloved in Damascus in 162 AH. Although some scholars are of the opinion that he was martyred in 165 AH in a naval expedition against

Byzantium. On his death a voice was heard proclaiming, "Now has indeed passed away the Imam of the world."

QUOTES & SAYINGS

1. Three veils must be removed from the traveler's heart so that the door of happiness is opened to him. First, should the dominion of both worlds be offered to him as an eternal gift, he should not rejoice. The second veil is that if he possesses the dominion of both worlds, and should it be taken from him, he should not feel sorry for his poverty. The third is that he should not be misguided by any praise or favour, for one who is misguided like this, is a low person and the low person is veiled.

2. If you would like to be a saint of God, then desire not the things of this world or the next. Empty yourself for God. Turn your face to Him so that He may turn to you and make you His saint.

3. Wara (abstaining) is the abandonment of whatever is dubious, and the abandonment of whatever does not concern you, means abandoning whatever is superfluous.

4. I delighted in Islam only three times. One time I was on board of ship and there was a man who laughed often. He would remark; "We used to grab an infidel in the land of the Turks thus," and he would tug at my hair and shake me back and forth. This would please me. Another time I became ill in a mosque. The man who made call to prayer told me to get out, but I could not.

So he grabbed me by my foot and dragged me out of the mosque. The third time, I was in Syria, and I was wearing fur. I looked at it, and I could not distinguish between its hair and the lice, such was their abundance. In "another tale, he reported: "My joy was never greater than the day I was sitting down and a man came and urinated on me." At another occasion, I was sitting and a man came and slapped me.

5. A man attains the rank of the righteous only after passing through these six steps:

- He must close the door of bounty and open the door of hardships.
- He must close the door of dignity and open the door of humility.
- He must close the door of comfort and open the door of striving.
- He must close the door of sleep and open the door of vigilance.
- He must close the door of wealth and open the door of poverty.
- He must close the door of worldly expectation and open the door of preparedness for death.

6. O God, You know that in my eyes the eight Paradises have little worth when they are compared with that honour which You have shown me in giving Your love or that familiarity which You have given me by the commemoration (dhikr) of Your Name or

that freedom from all else which You have granted me when I meditate on the greatness of Your Glory.

7. You enjoy the gifts of the Lord, but you do not offer gratitude to Him

8. You do not so act as to avoid Hell and enter Heaven.

9. You know the Devil is your enemy but you do not deal with him as such.

10. You know death must overtake you but you make no preparation for it.

11. You consign your dead parents to the grave and yet you do not take lessons from the incident (and feel as if you are immortal).

12. You know that you have many faults, yet you try to find faults within others.

13. When you commit a sin against God, do not partake of His food.

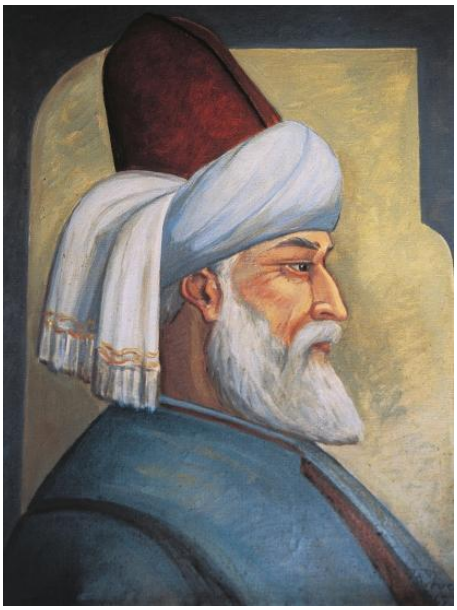
14. When you desire to commit a sin, get out of His kingdom.

15. Commit sin at a place where He cannot see you.

16. At the time of death seek a few moments respite from the messenger of death that you might repent during that time for your sins.

17. Do not allow the angels Munkar and Nakir to approach you and question you about your past deeds. If you cannot perform this, then vow never to sin.

Hazrat Maulana Rumi



Order: Mevlevi

Madhab: Hanafi

Born: 6 Rabi al-Awwal 604 AH/ 30 September 1207 AD Wakhsh (present-day Balkh Province, Tajikistan)

Passed away: 6 Jumada al-Thani 672 AH/ 17 December 1273 AD Konya (present-day Turkey)

Resting place: Konya, Turkey

Mawlana Jalaluddin Muhammad Rumi, also known as Jalaluddin Muhammad Balkhi (Persian: جلال الدین محمد بلخی) (30 September 1207 – 17 December 1273), often known respectfully as Mawlana ("Our Master"), is a thirteenth-century Persian Sufi saint, jurist, theologian, poet and one of the greatest spiritual masters of Islam.

He was known as Rumi ("Roman") because he spent most of his life in the region known by Muslims as "Rum," the Anatolian peninsula most of which had been conquered by the Seljuq Turks after centuries of rule by the Roman Empire. He is acknowledged as the father of one of Islam's major Sufi orders, the Mevlevi order although its actual inception came about through his disciples. He was also often referred to by the Persian title, Khodawandgar ("Great Master").

Mawlana is widely regarded as not only one of the greatest Sufi poets but has also been described by Western orientalists as "The most eminent Sufi poet whom Persia has produced", "The greatest mystical poet of Islam", "The greatest mystical poet of any age."

He is the author of the famous Masnavi a poem of 25,700 couplets, considered his greatest work that was composed in his later years, containing a great number of stories and anecdotes of diverse styles. His second best known work is the Diwan-i Shams-i Tabrizi, totaling some 40,000 couplets, which is a collection of poems describing the mystical states and expounding various points of Sufi doctrine. The Diwan is a collection of ecstatic utterances, with most of the ghazals (or "lyric poems of love") composed spontaneously by Mawlana during the Sama' (whirling meditation), a practice still performed today by the Sufis of the Mevlevi order.

MAJOR LIFE EVENTS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

- c. 1152 Birth of Hazrat Bahauddin Walad, father of Mawlana Rumi

- c. 1200 Hazrat Alaulddin, brother of Mawlana Rumi, is born to Hazrat Mo'mene Khatun and Hazrat Bahauddin
- 1207 Mawlana Rumi is born to Hazrat Mo'mene Khatun and Hazrat Bahauddin
- c. 1212 Hazrat Bahauddin and family living in Samarqand
- c. 1216 Family leave Khorasan for Baghdad and Mecca (March)
- c. 1217 Brief stays in Damascus and Malatya (summer)
- c. 1218 Family stay in Aqshahr near Erzincan for four years
- 1221 Mongol army sack Balkh
- c. 1222 Family in Laranda for seven years. Death of Hazrat Mo'mene Khatun, Mawlana Rumi's mother (between 1222 and 1229)
- 1224 Marriage of Mawlana Rumi to Gowhar Khatun
- 1226 Birth of Mawlana Rumi's son, Hazrat Sultan Walad
- c. 1229 Family settles permanently in Konya
- 1231 Death of Mawlana Rumi's father, Hazrat Bahauddin Walad
- c. 1232 Arrival of Hazrat Burhanuddin Muhaqqiq al-Tirmidhi in Konya. Mawlana Rumi studies in Syria (c.1232-7) and returns to Konya as accomplished scholar
- 1241 Death of Hazrat Burhanuddin Muhaqqiq
- 1244 Arrival of Hazrat Shams Tabrizi in Konya (November 29). Mawlana Rumi takes up Sama' and composes lyrical poems during this period

- 1246 Hazrat Shams quits Konya for Syria (March 11). Mawlana Rumi stops composing poetry but resumes with five or six poems after receiving word from Hazrat Shams
- 1247 Return of Hazrat Shams to Konya (April) where joyful banquets are held. Mawlana Rumi composes new poems
- 1247 Marriage of Hazrat Shams to Kimia (sometime between October and December)
- c. 1247-8 Hazrat Shams disappears from Konya forever. At least two trips to Syria in search of Hazrat Shams. Mawlana Rumi chooses Hazrat Salahuddin Zarkub as his successor.
- 1258 Death of Hazrat Salahuddin Zarkub (December 29)
- c. 1262 Hazrat Alauddin, Mawlana Rumi's eldest son, dies (mid-September). Composition of the Masnavi begins
- c. 1264 Book two begins (sometime between November 1263 and October 1264)
- 1272 Birth of Hazrat Ulu Arif Chelebi, son of Hazrat Sultan Walad by Fateme Khatun, daughter of Hazrat Salahuddin
- 1273 Death of Mawlana Rumi (December 17)

FAMILY & BIRTH

Mawlana was born on 30 September 1207 AD. Originally it was thought he was born in Balkh, in the province of Khorasan in northern Persia (now Afghanistan). However, recent scholarship suggests that at the time of his birth, his father is said to have been living some 250km north-east of Balkh, in the small town of

Wakhsh, situated in modern Tajikistan, where his father lived and worked as a jurist and preacher between 1204 and 1210.

Hazrat Husain ibn Ahmad Khatibi, the grandfather of Mawlana, was a great scholar, and was considered a great spiritual leader not only by learned men but also by contemporary rulers so much so that he is said to have married Malika-i-Jahan, the only daughter of the Sultan of Khwarizmshah, Sultan Alauddin Muhammad. This relationship is rejected by some modern scholars.

His marriage to the princess had been foretold in the dreams of four people – Himself, the Sultan of Khwarizmshah, the princess and his vizier – in which each was told by the Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله وصحبه وسلم that Hazrat Husain ibn Ahmad should marry the princess. Nine months after their marriage, they had a son whom they named Bahauddin.

Mawlana's father, Hazrat Bahauddin Walad, inherited the traditions of his father in the realm of knowledge and spiritual eminence. He was acknowledged as a man of deep learning and bore the title of Sultan al-'Ulama (King of Scholars) and is also said to have been a descendant of Abu Bakr, the First Caliph and close companion of the Prophet although some scholars disagree with this.

Hazrat Bahauddin had strong mystical inclinations and his surviving spiritual journal, preserved under the title Ma'arif (Gnostic Wisdom), records some of his experiences. In one striking entry, he reports:

"I obliterated myself, stripping myself of all forms so that I could see God. I told myself I would obliterate God and strip God of all forms to see God and attain His blessings more immediately. I chanted 'God' and my consciousness joined to God and I saw God, in the guise of His Godhead and the attributes of perfection."

EARLY LIFE

Much of Mawlana's formative years were spent traveling with his family. After his birth, the family left Khorasan and lived in various Middle Eastern cities for about a decade. Various explanations are given for the family's departure from Khorasan. Some say Hazrat Bahauddin left because of a premonition about the impending Mongol invasion, which devastated much of the area, whilst others say his departure was due to the hostility of Fakhruddin Razi, the philosopher and influential courtier of the Khwarizmshah.

At the time that Hazrat Bahauddin emigrated westwards, his family consisted of a daughter, Fatima Khatun, an eldest son, Husayn, both of whom probably stayed behind in Khorasan, along with Hazrat Bahauddin's elderly mother. The family members he took with him included his wife, Mu'mine Khatun, and two sons, Hazrat Jalaluddin and Alauddin. Hazrat Jalaluddin's brother was the elder of the two by two years, having been born in 1205.

According to some scholars, Mawlana encountered one of the most famous mystic Persian poets, Hazrat Fariduddin Attar, in the Iranian city of Nishapur after leaving Samarkand. Hazrat

Fariduddin, appeared to have been deeply impressed by the young Hazrat Jalaluddin Rumi and presented him with a copy of his Asrarnama (Book of Secrets). As Hazrat Bahauddin set off again with his young son following behind, Hazrat Fariduddin is said to have remarked: "There goes a river dragging a mighty ocean behind it."

As a child, Mawlana Rumi was quick, intelligent and full of curiosity. One such story highlighting his spiritual prowess during his childhood relates that at the age of six when, in response to a request from his playmates to jump to a neighboring terrace, he is reported to have replied:

"My brethren, to jump from terrace to terrace is an act well adapted for cats, dogs and the like to perform; come now, if you feel disposed, let us spring up to the heavens, and visit the regions of God's realm."

FROM KHORASAN TO ANATOLIA

From Khorasan, the travellers journeyed on to Baghdad, where it is suggested they arrived in 1217 and stayed for about one month, where he was received by the great Sufi shaykh Shahabuddin al-Suhrawardi of the Suhrawardi Tariqa. In Baghdad, Hazrat Bahauddin turned down the Caliph's gift of money, citing it was money unlawfully acquired and refused to visit him, although he did accept an invitation to preach in his presence in the congregational mosque. During the Friday sermon, Hazrat Bahauddin reproached the Caliph for his corrupt way of life,

warning him of his impending end in the forthcoming Mongol invasion.

Before the family left Baghdad, news was received of the siege of Balkh, where the Mongol army had captured and destroyed the ancient centre of learning.

From Baghdad, Mawlana went to Syria with his father, visiting Damascus and Aleppo before undertaking the pilgrimage to Mecca. The family arrived at Aqshahr, near Erzincan (on the upper reaches of the Euphrates) in eastern Anatolia, between late 1217 and early 1218.There Hazrat Bahauddin is said to have taught for four years in a college (Madrasah) built for him by the wife of Fakhruddin Bahramshah, the local ruler and a great patron of learning.

LARANDA AND KONYA

From Aqshahr, the party went to Larinda, which was situated in the central Anatolian province of Rum (the "Roman land" from which the name Rumi is derived from). The family remained there for about seven years, during which time Hazrat Bahauddin taught in the madrasah under the patronage of Amir Musa, the local governer. The period in Laranda was also marked by two deaths, a marriage, and two births in the family. Hazrat Alauddin, the elder brother of Mawlana Rumi and Mu'mine Khatun, his mother, both died.

At the age of 17, Mawlana married Gowher Khatun, the daughter of Sharfuddin of Samarqand and, in due course, Mawlana's wife gave birth to two sons – Alauddin, named after his recently

deceased older brother, and Sultan Walad, who was named in honour of his grandfather. The two boys were born about a year apart.

While in Laranda, Hazrat Bahauddin received an invitation from the Seljuq ruler, Alauddin Kayqubad, to teach in Konya, where the family settled in 1229 when Mawlana Rumi was 22 of age.

Hazrat Bahauddin evidently intended Mawlana Rumi to succeed him as Mufti (preacher) and he introduced him to his congregation and students and gave him the opportunity to preach. Hazrat Bahauddin taught in the Madrasah in Konya until his death, two years later, in February 1231 when he was about 80 years old.

EDUCATION

Mawlana Rumi's father had appointed his own trusted disciple, Hazrat Burhanuddin Muhaqqiq al-Tirmidhi, as a tutor responsible for his son's education during his infancy.

A year after the death of Hazrat Bahauddin, Hazrat Burhanuddin arrived in Konya, unaware of the fact that his Master had passed away. Having had lost his teacher, Hazrat Burhanuddin was reunited with Mawlana Rumi and assumed a role that he had had some nineteen or so years previously when he had been tutor to the infant Mawlana Rumi, this time being placed in charge of Mawlana Rumi's spiritual education.

Mawlana surrendered himself completely to his teacher during a period of intensive training lasting nearly nine years in which he

later recalls with a glowing tribute to his teacher:

"Be mature and transcend all change

And become the light incarnate like Burhan Muhaqqiq.

When you escape from yourself you become Burhan,

When you say, 'I am a slave,' you become a king."

Hazrat Burhanuddin sent Mawlana Rumi to Halab (Aleppo), where studied at Madrassa Halawiyya (a college of the Ḥanafi school of Sunni Islamic law) and then to Damascus in order to further his studies. These two places were the most important centres of Islamic learning during the thirteenth century and managed to remain immune from the destruction of the Mongols. During his stay in Syria, Mawlana Rumi pursued a traditional course of religious studies, including Fiqh, Tafsir, Arabic language and literature, Hadith and theology.

After spending seven years in Syria, Mawlana Rumi returned to Kayseri (ancient Caesarea) where he was instructed by Hazrat Burhanuddin in undertaking the spiritual practices of the Sufis, such as fasting, and it was after a particularly rigorous fast during which Mawlana Rumi is said to have performed three forty-day fasts in succession, that Hazrat Burhanuddin pronounced him 'perfect in all the sciences, outer and inner, human and spiritual'.

Mawlana Rumi also began to study and deeply treasure his father's spiritual journal, absorbing its mystical accounts, as well as the spiritual notebooks and Quran Tafasir (commentaries) of Hazrat Burhanuddin.

Hazrat Burhanuddin then directed Mawlana Rumi to start his mission of assisting and preaching to those who had gone astray in Konya, while he himself resumed preaching duties in Kayseri until he later passed away in 1241. Thus, Mawlana Rumi became a fully-fledged successor to his father.

Not long after Mawlana's return to Konya, in 1242 or 1243, his wife Gowhar Khatun passed away. Between 1240 and 1245, Mawlana's teenage sons went to Damascus to acquire an education like their father's, under the protection of their maternal grandfather, Hazrat Sharfuddin. After they returned, Hazrat Sultan Walad would sometimes sit near his father during his lectures and people would mistake them for brothers, rather than father and son, on account of their relatively small age difference.

Mawlana was later remarried to a widow named Kerra Khatun (d.1292) with whom he had a third son, Muzaffar al-Din Amir Alim Chelebi (d.1277), and a daughter, Malika Khatun (d. 1303-1306).

CAREER IN KONYA

In Konya, Mawlana Rumi took over his father's old position as teacher in the Madrasah. His life was the life of a learned orthodox professor addressing vast audiences, consisting of both men and women, on religion, philosophy, Islamic law and morals. He had attained a reputation for profound knowledge and was recognised as an authority on religion by the age of 34.

MEETING WITH HAZRAT SHAMS TABRIZI

On November 29 1244, Mawlana Rumi's life took an abrupt mystical turn. As he strolled through Konya's marketplace on his way home from the madrasah, he was approached by a dervish named Shams al-Din Tabrizi. Shams al-Din ("Sun of the Faith") was a formidable mystic who had long been looking for a saintly and spiritual companion. In his writings he states:

"I implored God to allow to mix with and be a companion of His friends (awliya-ye khwod). I had a dream and was told, "We will make you a companion of a saint." I asked, "Where is this saint?" The next night I was told in a dream, "He is in Anatolia (Rum)." After a while, I had another dream and was told, "It's not yet time. All things come in the fullness of time."

Elsewhere, he states:

"I wanted someone of my own type to make into my Qibla [the direction one faces in prayer] and turn to, for I had grown tired of myself."

Accounts differ as to exactly what happened at this first meeting between the two, but it was a life-changing experience for Mawlana Rumi. The most frequently repeated account of what happened is related by Ahmed Aflaki in Manaqib al-'Arifin:

"One day, as he [Shams] was seated at the gate of an inn, Rumi came by, riding on a mule, in the midst of a crowd of students and disciples on foot. Shams arose, advanced and took hold of the mule's bridle, addressing Rumi in these words, 'Exchanger of the current coins of deep meaning, who knows the Names of God! Tell me, was Muhammad صلى الله عليه وآله وصحبه وسلم the greater servant of God, or Bayazid Bistami?'

Rumi answered him, 'Muhammad صلى الله عليه وآله وصحبه وسلم was incomparably the greater – the greatest of all prophets and saints.'

'Then,' rejoined Shams, 'How is it that Muhammad ﷺ said, "We have not known Thee, O God, as Thou ought to be known," whereas Bayazid said, "Glory unto me! How great is my glory."?'

On hearing this question, Rumi fainted. On regaining his senses, he took the questioner to his home."

An exchange ensued between the two men, with Mawlana Rumi finally saying that Hazrat Bayazid's spiritual thirst was quenched after one drink, he spoke of being full and so he stopped seeking. However, the Prophet's ﷺ thirst was never quenched and he went on seeking, aspiring to be drawn closer to the Divine. It was for this reason that he said, 'We have not known Thee as Thou ought to be known.' Hearing this, it was Hazrat Shams that fainted.

Hazrat Muhyiddin Abdul Qadir, a contemporary of Hazrat Sultan Walad, the son of Mawlana Rumi, gives another account of the meeting:

"Rumi was addressing his students as usual in his house. Before him was lying a heap of books. During the lecture, a man entered and politely took his seat in a corner after formal greetings.

Pointing towards the books the visitor said: "What is this?"

Rumi who was busy with his lecture must have been annoyed with such a silly interruption for the books were there for anybody to see, and on the face of it the question was both preposterous and irrelevant. It was, moreover, a breach of good manners for a student to interrupt the Master so insolently during the course of his lecture.

Rumi, therefore, brushed the question aside by simply saying: 'You don't know,' at which point the books caught fire.

Bewildered and aghast Rumi looked about for an explanation of this phenomenon.

'What is this?' he asked, turning his face towards the newcomer who simply repeated Rumi's own words, 'You don't know!' and quietly walked away.

Rumi left his lecture, and, according to Abdul Qadir, went in search of Shams but could not trace him."

The two were inseparable, day and night and it is said that the two spent days, even months, together in a state of mystical communion. Mawlana Rumi's old life fell away and he neglected his duties as a teacher and as a family man. Hazrat Shams introduced Mawlana to Sama', the meditational practice of whirling and the two spent long hours at the Sama'. Mawlana Rumi was overwhelmed by the very presence of Hazrat Shams.

One biographer describes Mawlana Rumi's spiritual transformation:

"The encounter with Shams triggered the completion of a paradigm shift in Rumi's approach to piety and spirituality; he discovered that beyond the safe, dry and socially approved forms of obedience (prayer, sermonizing, discovering and applying the principles of law) and renunciation (fasting, controlling the passions and the ego), there is a meta-spirituality of love, which consists in joyously and creatively celebrating our relationship with God."

Hazrat Sultan Walad, Maulana Rumi's son, looked back on his father's transformation through this poem:

"Through love, a fatwa-writing Shaykh turned poet

though ascetic, he grew intoxicate

but not from a wine which is made of grapes –

a spirit of light drinks only wine of light."

HAZRAT SHAMS LEAVES FOR SYRIA

The sudden and total disappearance of Mawlana aroused resentment among his followers, some of them becoming highly critical of Hazrat Shams, even threatening him. In March of 1246, Hazrat Shams, perhaps sensing imminent danger, left Konya and went to Syria without warning.

Some months later, news arrived that Hazrat Shams had been seen in Damascus and letters were sent asking him to return to Konya. Hazrat Shams, however, refused. Eventually he returned in April 1247 only after Hazrat Sultan Walad, Mawlana Rumi's son, was sent to invite him back.

Hazrat Shams was received back with joyous celebration and he and Mawlana Rumi returned to their intense discussions. After a while, by the end of 1247, Hazrat Shams was married to Kimia, a young woman who'd grown up in Mawlana Rumi's household. Sadly, Kimia did not live long after the marriage and passed away upon falling ill after a stroll in the garden.

HAZRAT SHAMS MYSTERIOUSLY DISAPPEARS

In late 1247 or early 1248, ongoing enmity from some disciples compelled Hazrat Shams to depart again. In a conversation with Hazrat Sultan Walad, Hazrat Shams warned him that this time he would "disappear into thin air such that no one would find any trace of him".

Soon after, he disappeared permanently and although nobody knows for certain what came of Hazrat Shams, Ahmed Aflaki in Manaqib al-'Arifin relates that he was murdered by disciples of Mawlana Rumi. The story, according to Aflaki, states that one evening in December of 1247, Mawlana Rumi and Hazrat Shams were together when there was a knock at the door and it was announced that a dervish who had travelled a long distance was asking to see Hazrat Shams. Hazrat Shams left the room and was never seen again. It is said that he was attacked and stabbed to

death by a gang of assailants led by Mawlana Rumi's son, Alauddin. Mawlana heard Hazrat Shams cry out, but by the time he arrived on the scene Hazrat Shams' body had already been carried away into the night.

This account has been challenged by other scholars as there were no witnesses to his apparent death. Furthermore, neither his son Hazrat Sultan Walad, nor his disciple Hazrat Sepahsalar mentioned a murder in their works that are earlier than Aflaki's work.

Whatever happened, Mawlana Rumi was for a period of time deeply saddened and he cut off his association with all those disciples that had showed hostility towards Hazrat Shams. Later, Mawlana took a group of his closest disciples to Damascus in search of Hazrat Shams but unsuccessful in their quest, they eventually returned. A few years later, Mawlana undertook a second journey which again proved unfruitful. Finally, Mawlana resigned himself to the loss of Hazrat Shams by saying:

"Since I'm him, for what do I search?

I'm his mirror image and will speak myself."

Referring to a famous Hadith of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله وصحبه وسلم, Mawlana eventually found union not with Hazrat Shams, but within himself:

"Whoso has known himself has known God too

and knows all that the Prophets knew."

Mawlana Rumi thus once again resumed his roles as teacher and author.

LATER YEARS

What followed next was a period of refinement, during which Mawlana Rumi's powers as poet and teacher soared to new heights.

SALAHUDDIN ZARKUB

Following the disappearance of Hazrat Shams, Mawlana found a new spiritual companion in the form of a goldsmith called Hazrat Salahuddin Zarkub. Mawlana Rumi was already acquainted with Hazrat Salahuddin, who had come to Konya in 1235. He, like Mawlana himself, had previously been a disciple of Hazrat Burhanuddin Muhaqqiq; later he had gone back to his village and had married before returning to the capital where he was reunited with Mawlana.

Tradition relates that when they met again, Hazrat Salahuddin was working in the goldsmiths' market in Konya. As Mawlana was walking past Hazrat Salahuddin's workshop, he, with his hammer was busy tapping away, molding a gold piece. The hammer's rhythm caught Mawlana Rumi's ear and he broke into ecstatic dance in a turning, whirling movement. Mawlana Rumi took Hazrat Salahuddin by the hand to whirl with him through the streets.

From that moment, Hazrat Salahuddin became his close companion, although Mawlana's relationship with him was less intense than with Shams. As Hazrat Salahuddin began to receive the singular attention from Mawlana that Hazrat Shams had enjoyed, Mawlana's disciples once again became resentful — even more so since Hazrat Salahuddin, unlike Hazrat Shams, was not yet a respected teacher.

At this point, Mawlana was no longer inclined to play the role of sheikh himself and therefore needed someone else to take over this role. Thus, he appointed Hazrat Salahuddin as his successor (Khalifa) and he competently served as Mawlana's deputy, overseeing the organization and discipline of the Master's close followers. Furthermore, Mawlana recommended that his son, Hazrat Sultan Walad, accept Hazrat Salahuddin as his Sufi sheikh and he arranged for his son to marry Hazrat Salahuddin's daughter, Fatima, which further strengthened the bond between the two men. Mawlana loved his daughter-in-law tenderly and his letters to her are those of a loving father and caring parent.

After the troubles with certain disciples was smoothed over, Hazrat Salahuddin and Mawlana Rumi lived happily amongst the disciples, teaching and training them for a period of ten years until 1258 when Hazrat Salahuddin fell ill and passed away.

Hazrat Salahuddin's funeral turned into that of whirling ecstasy, in fulfilment of his own wish, as his son-in-law Hazrat Sultan Walad relates:

"The master spoke: Now for my funeral

Bring drums and tambourines and kettledrums

And bring me dancing to my grave, my friends,

Intoxicated, joyful, clap your hands!"

HUSAMUDDIN CHELEBI

While Hazrat Salahuddin was still alive, another close disciple of Mawlana Rumi's rose to a position of prominence within the Sufi community – Hazrat Husamuddin Chelebi, who had first met Rumi while a young boy and was still in his teens when he became one of his disciples. After the demise of Hazrat Salahuddin, Hazrat Husamuddin rose to the position of Khalifah and became Mawlana's constant companion. He was frequently referred to by Mawlana as Zia al-Haq ("The Light of Truth").

Hazrat Husamuddin served as Mawlana Rumi's scribe and it was at his request that Mawlana composed a short poem for the benefit of his close followers. Eighteen verses long, this poem – now known as the Song of the Reed – was destined to become the opening of the Mathnawi, for when Mawlana Rumi presented it to Hazrat Husamuddin he said, "From now on I will recite, and you will write the rest". The dictation of 'the rest', which extends to six books, probably began in 1262 and, apart from one or two interruptions, continued until 1273.

He wrote down the verses bursting from Mawlana's frequent states of ecstasy and the spiritual power of Mawlana's verses often put Hazrat Husamuddin himself into ecstatic states. He would quickly write down what Mawlana Rumi composed and would sing back what he had recorded for Mawlana's

confirmation and approval. This would sometimes last throughout the night. Hazrat Husamuddin repeatedly reviewed what had been written, correcting various words and amending the syntax.

While dictating the Masnavi to Hazrat Husamuddin, Mawlana Rumi continued his teaching and social activities. He rarely left Konya during his final years, other than journeying to the hot springs in Ilgin once a year.

DEMISE

In the autumn of 1273, Mawlana Rumi fell ill. The Sultan, his vizier and other officials came to visit him on his sickbed, and two physicians were in attendance, constantly checking his pulse and consulting their medical books. For forty days before his demise, Konya had been shaken by earthquakes and people flocked to him to ask for his intercession to prevent any impending disaster. Mawlana assured them that no harm would come to the town and they needn't worry. He explained that the earth was hungry for a juicy morsel and it would soon be satisfied. He consoled those closest to him by reminding them that death is not separation but liberation of the soul:

"Don't cry: "Woe, parted!" at my burial –

For me, this is the time of joyful meeting!

Don't say "Farewell" when I'm put in the grave –

It is a curtain for eternal grace! "

On 17 December 1273 (5 Jumada al-Thani, 672 AH) at sunset, at the age of 66, Mawlana Rumi left this world and was reunited with his Lord, an occasion which is referred to by his followers as his 'wedding night', or 'night of union'. That evening, preparations for the burial were made and the following day, his body was lifted up on a bier and carried through the city. Mawlana Rumi was mourned by the entire city of Konya, and his funeral was attended by people of all ages, races and religions: men, women and children; Turks, Greeks, and Arabs; Muslims, Jews and Christians.

When non-Muslims were asked why they were attending the funeral of a Muslim saint, they replied that 'they had learnt from him more of the mysteries shrouded in their scriptures, than they had ever known before, and they declared, "If you Muslims hold him to have been the Muhammad صلى الله عليه وآله وصحبه وسلم of his age, for us he was the Moses, the David, and the Jesus of our time." His son recalls this scene:

"The people of the city, young and old

Were all lamenting, crying, sighing loud

The villagers as well as Turks and Greeks,

They tore their shirts from grief for this great man.

"He was our Jesus!" – thus the Christians spoke.

"He was our Moses!" – said the Jews of him…"

BURIAL PLACE

A short while after Mawlana Rumi's death, the Seljuq Sultan, Alam al-Din Qaysar, approached Hazrat Sultan Walad about erecting the Green Dome, the building which houses the mausoleum of Mawlana Rumi, for which he required 30,000 dirhams. Several times this amount was collected and thus Badr al-Din Tabrizi, an architect and disciple of Mawlana Rumi who was described by Mawlana as "the second Socrates and Greek Plato" supervised the construction of the shrine. On his sarcophagus, several of his poems are inscribed as well as verses from the Quran. One of the poems which was inscribed begins:

"On the day I die

as they bear aloft my bier

do not suppose

I'm consumed by the cares of this world.

Don't cry for me and do not lament."

In the centuries since, Mawlana Rumi's tomb has been visited by people from all walks of life, Muslim and non-Muslim alike. During the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent (d.1566), the Semahane (a ceremonial hall where the Sama' or 'whirling' meditation is carried out) was built adjoining Mawlana Rumi's mausoleum, which is also the burial place of his father and other successors of the Mevlevi Order.

SUCCESSORS

- It was Mawlana Rumi's wish that Hazrat Husamuddin be his spiritual successor (Khalifa). Hazrat Husamuddin remained at the helm of the Mevlevi community until he passed away, guiding it according to the ideas and principles of its late master. Every Friday following the prayers and recitation of the Quran, Hazrat Husamuddin would hold readings of the Masnavi and a undertake a session of Sama', which would be attended by hundreds of disciples and other members of the Sufi community. When Hazrat Husamuddin died in 1284, he was succeeded by Mawlana Rumi's son, Hazrat Sultan Walad, who was instrumental in founding and organising the the Mevlevi Order of Sufis. During his tenure, the wisdom and knowledge of the disciples increased, as did the number of both male and female initiates. In response to the growth and spread of the Mevlevi Order throughout Anatolia, Khalifas were appointed by Hazrat Sultan Walad in each city where there were a sizeable number of disciples. When he passed away in 1312, at the age of 86, the Mevlevi order was firmly shaped and was set to become one of the most influential orders in Anatolia.

SPIRITUAL CHAIN (SILSILA)

- Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi, disciple of
- Sheikh Burhanuddin Muhaqqiq al-Tirmidhi, disciple of
- Sheikh Bahauddin Walad (Mawlana's father), disciple of
- Sheikh Shams al-Din al-Sarakhsi, disciple of

- Sheikh Ahmad Khatibi (Hazrat Bahauddin's grandfather), disciple of
- Sheikh Ahmad Ghazali, disciple of
- Sheikh Abu Bakr Nassaj Tusi, disciple of
- Sheikh Muhammad Zojjaj, disciple of
- Sheikh Abu Bakr Shibli, disciple of
- Sheikh Junayd Baghdadi, disciple of
- Sheikh Abu'l Hasan Sari Saqati, disciple of
- Sheikh Maruf al-Karkhi, disciple of
- Sheikh Dawud Ta'i, disciple of
- Sheikh Habib al-'Ajami, disciple of
- Sheikh Hasan al-Basri, disciple of
- Sayyadina Ali ibn Abi Talib رضي الله عنه, disciple of
- Sayyidina Muhammad ibn Abdullah ﷺ

MAJOR WORKS

Mawlana Rumi's mother tongue was Persian, but acquired knowledge of Arabic as a child while learning to read and recite the Qur'an. Following his family's migration to Anatolia, he also learnt Turkish. His intimate knowledge of these languages is reflected in his writings, which although written mainly in Persian contain passages in Arabic and Turkish. His three major works are generally referred to as the Masnavi, Divan-i Shams-i Tabrizi, and the Fihi Ma Fihi.

- Masnavi or Masnavi e Ma'navi (Persian: مثنوی معنوی, meaning "Rhyming Couplets of Profound Spiritual Meaning") was the result of Hazrat Husamuddin's initial request for Mawlana Rumi to write a short 'teaching' poem. It takes the form of an extended poem, 25,577 verses long, and comprises six books, each with a prose introduction. It is an exceptional work, not only in length but also in style and content, for it blends traditional tales, parables, anecdotes and legends about the Sufi saints with stories about the prophets, and commentaries on the Prophetic Traditions and passages from the Qur'an. It is considered by many to be one of the greatest works of Sufi poetry.
- Divan-i Shams-i Tabrizi (Persian: دیوان شمس تبریزی, meaning "The Works of Shams Tabrizi") is a collection of Mawlana Rumi's lyrical poetry, much of which was written under the name of Shamsuddin of Tabriz. It comprises of 3,229 ghazals and qasidas (odes; 34,662 lines), 1,983 ruba'iyyat (quatrains; 7,932 lines) and 44 tarji-bands (1,698 lines). Most of the poems are in written in Persian, although there are also some in Arabic and a small number of mixed Persian/Greek poems. It is considered to be one of the greatest works of Persian literature. The poems in the Divan cover a span of almost thirty years, from shortly after Hazrat Shams' arrival in Konya to Mawlana Rumi's death in 1273. The poems are an impassioned celebration of the Divine Unity; or, perhaps more specifically, of love.
- Fihi Ma Fihi (Persian: فیه ما فیه, literally meaning "What's in it is in it") contains the transcripts of 72 short discourses given by Mawlana Rumi to his close followers, written in prose

during the last years of his life. The discourses were written down by a scribe while the conversation was taking place, and may have been corrected later by Mawlana Rumi himself. Among the subjects of the discourses are the outer and inner worlds, duality and nonduality, the Sufi path to enlightenment, and the relationship between the pupil and his/her spiritual mentor. The discourses themselves are enlivened with anecdotes and stories, and in many instances they also incorporate rudimentary lessons in human and spiritual psychology.

In addition to these three main works are:

- Makatib (Persian: مکاتیب, meaning "The Letters") consists of 144 letters from Mawlana Rumi, most written from the 1240s onwards, to various officials and men of influence on behalf of family members, disciples and those in need. It demonstrates that Mawlana Rumi was very involved in the lives of those around him.
- Majalis-i Sab'a (Persian: مجالس سبعه, meaning "Seven Sessions") is a small booklet which contains seven of Mawlana Rumi's public, formal sermons. The sermons give a commentary on the deeper meaning of Quran and Hadith. The sermons also include quotations from poets such as Hazrat Sana'i Ghaznavi, Hazrat Fariduddin Attar and others.

QUOTES, SAYINGS & POEMS

LOVE FOR THE PROPHET صلى الله عليه وآله وصحبه وسلم

The light of Muhammad صلى الله عليه وآله وصحبه وسلم has become distributed in millions of pieces and has encompassed the whole world. The Prophet was like the lightening of that light. When it strikes, all veils of unbelief are torn, and thousands of monks are influenced by Muhammad صلى الله عليه وآله وصحبه وسلم and run toward him.

When Muhammad's صلى الله عليه وآله وصحبه وسلم light came, unbelief put on its black clothes. When the period of the eternal kingdom came, the unbelievers hit the drum to prevent death. The whole face of the earth had become green. The heavens envied the earth and tore its sleeve. The moon had become split. The earth received life and became alive. Last night, there was a big commotion among the stars because a peerless star had descended to the earth.

I am the servant of the Qur'an as long as I live. And I am the soil where the foot of Muhammad صلى الله عليه وآله وصحبه وسلم stepped.

There has never been a beauty like that of a (Prophet like) Muhammad صلى الله عليه وآله وصحبه وسلم in this world or the next. May the Glory of God help him!

We learned the skill of being a (true) man from God. We are the heroes of love and the companions of Muhammad صلى الله عليه وآله وصحبه وسلم.

Heart and love have become friends, like Ahmad صلى الله عليه وآله وصحبه وسلم and Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه became friends in the cave. These two friends' names were different, but their spirits were one.

His (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وآله وصحبه وسلم) words totally are pearls from the ocean of reality because his heart was united with the ocean of truth.

If the face of Muhammad صلى الله عليه وآله وصحبه وسلم is reflected on a wall, the heart of the wall will become alive. The wall, through his blessed reflection, will have such great happiness that even the wall will be rescued from hypocrisy. It was a shame for the wall to have two faces while the pious and the pure had only one.

Hazrat Ma'ruf al-Karkhi

Order: Aaliyah Qadiriyah Barakatiyah Razaviyah Nooriyah.

Born: c.132 AH / 750 AD Karkh, Bagdad, Iraq

Passed away: c.200 AH / 815 AD

Resting place: Baghdad, Iraq

Abu Mahfuz Ma'ruf Al-Karkhi ibn Firuz al-Karkhi, is the ninth Imam and Shaykh of the spiritual order Aaliyah Qadiriyah Barakatiyah Razaviyah Nooriyah. His spiritual title is Abu Mahfuz and he was well known as Ma'ruf al-Karkhi. According to differences of opinion, his father's name was Firuz, Phirouzan or Ali. His father and mother were Christians who accepted Islam after him. He attained all his knowledge under the watchful eye of Ali ibn Musa al-Rida.

EARLY LIFE

Initially, he was brought up as a non-Muslim, but even as a child, he had great love for Islam. He used to always spend his time in the company of Muslim children, and often talked to his parents about accepting Islam. His father was not pleased with this, and enrolled him to study under a Christian Priest.

When they sent him to school, his teacher said to him, "Say, God is the third of three." "No," answered Ma'ruf al-Karkhi. "On the contrary, He is God, the One." The teacher beat him, but to no avail.

Ma'ruf al-Karkhi says, "Even during my time as a non-Muslim my heart did not accept to say what he commanded me to. When I refused to say this, he began to beat me severely. The more he beat me, the more I rejected his teaching. He finally became weary of me and asked my father to imprison me. I was thus locked in a room for three days and every day, I was given one bread, which I did not even touch. When I was taken out, I ran away. As I was the only child to my parents, they were very sad and they sent a message to me saying that I should return to them and I would have the right to accept whichever faith I wished, and that they too will accept the same faith. I then went to Ali al-Rida and accepted Islam at his hands. I then went home with this most valuable gift of Islam, and my parents also accepted Islam.

After that Ma'ruf al-Karkhi fell under the guidance of Dawud al-Ta'i and underwent a severe discipline. He proved himself so

devout and practised such austerities that the fame of his steadfastness was known abroad.

Mohammad ibn Mansur al-Tusi relates that he encountered Ma'ruf al-Karkhi in Baghdad. "I observed a scar on his face. I said to him, 'I was with you yesterday and did not notice this mark then. What is it?' 'Do not ask about things that do not concern you,' he replied. 'Ask only about matters that are profitable to you.' 'By the right of Him we worship,' I pleaded, 'tell me.' "Then he said, 'Last night I was praying, and I wished that I might go to Mecca and circumambulate the Kaaba. I approached the well of Zamzam to take a drink of water. My foot slipped, and my face struck the well. That was how I got this scar.'"

HIS CHARACTER

He was a very pious personality and one of the most distinguished Sufi's of his time. He would spend lengthy nights in worshipping, asking for forgiveness and weeping in the Court of God. Sirri Saqti say, "Whatever I have attained, is through the Sadqa (charity) of Ma'ruf al-Karkhi."

Abdul Wahab says, "I have not seen anyone who divorced himself from the world, like Ma'ruf al-Karkhi. His excellence is such, that even his blessed grave is a means of attaining blessings."

He possessed deep love for the poor and the orphans. Sirri Saqti says, "I once saw Ma'ruf al-Karkhi gathering dates on the day of Eid, so I stopped and asked the reason for this. He said, 'That young boy is crying because all the other children have new

clothes and he has nothing new on Eid day. I thus, decided to collect some dates, sell them and then buy something for him, so that he is kept busy playing and does not feel uncomfortable on the day of Eid.'" Sirri Saqti says, "I said, there is no need for you to do this, I will make sure he gets something on Eid. I then took the boy with me and bought him a new set of clothes. After I did this, a light entered my heart, which caused me great pleasure and my condition became very different."

Once Ma'ruf al-Karkhi went down to the Tigris to make his ablutions, leaving his Quran and prayer rug in the mosque. An old woman stole and went off with them. Ma'ruf al-Karkhi ran after her. When he caught up with her he addressed her, lowering his head so that his eyes might not fall on her. "Have you a son who can read the Quran?" "No," she replied. "Then give me back the Quran. You can have the prayer rug." The woman was amazed at his clemency, and set down both the Quran and the prayer rug. "No, take the prayer rug," repeated Ma'ruf Al-Karkhi. "It is lawfully yours." The woman hastened away in shame and confusion.

One day Ma'ruf Al-Karkhi broke his ritual purity. Immediately he made Tayammum. "Why look," they said to him. "Here is the Tigris. Why are you making Tayammum?" "It can be," he replied, "that I may be no more by the time I reach it."

ABSTINENCE FROM THE WORLD

Once one of Ma'ruf Al-Karkhi's friends asked him the following, "What is it that has caused you to abstain from the world and from the creation of God, and remain in seclusion, remembering

Almighty God? Is it the fear of Death and the grave, or the fear of Hell, or the enthusiasm of attaining Paradise?" Ma'ruf al-Karkhi said, "O My Friend! You discuss such minor things. What are all these worth in front of the creator Almighty God? All these are but humble subjects of Almighty God. Once you taste the pleasure of his closeness, then you will not think of any of the other things (you have mentioned)."

MIRACLES

Numerous instances of Karamat (miracles) have been attributed to Ma'ruf al-Karkhi. Just a few of them are related here:

Once there was a bandit who was captured by the Governor and sentenced to being hanged. As per the command of the governor, the bandit was hanged and died. His body was still hanging from the noose, when Ma'ruf al-Karkhi passed by. When he saw this scene, he was very troubled, and began to make prayer for forgiveness of the deceased. He said, "O Most Compassionate, Most Merciful! This person has attained his punishment for his actions in this world. O God! If you forgive him and bless him with respect, there it shall cause no shortage in Your Treasures of forgiveness." Immediately a voice was heard saying, "Whomsoever prays the funeral prayer for the man on the noose, shall attain an exalted status in the Hereafter." This voice was heard by the people in the entire town. On hearing this voice, people in town gathered quickly. They removed him from the noose, and performed a cleaning ritual and provided a Kaffan (burial cloth). Then with much respect, they prayed his funeral prayer and buried him. That night a man dreamt that it was the

Day of Reckoning, and the man who was hanged, was dressed in the best of clothing and was present in the ranks of the praised. He asked him, how he received such excellence and the man replied, "Almighty accepted the prayer of Ma'ruf al-Karkhi and pardoned me."

Ma'ruf al-Karkhi had an uncle who was governor of the city. One day he was passing some wasteland when he observed Ma'ruf al-Karkhi sitting there eating bread. Before him there was a dog, and Ma'ruf al-Karkhi was putting one morsel in his own mouth and then one in the dog's. "Are you not ashamed to eat bread with a dog?" stated his uncle. "It is out of shame that I am giving bread to the poor," replied Ma'ruf al-Karkhi. Then he raised his head and called to a bird in the air. The bird flew down and perched on his hand, covering his head and eyes with his wings. "Whosoever is ashamed before God," said Ma'ruf al-Karkhi, "everything is ashamed before him." At once his uncle was filled with confusion.

One day Ma'ruf Al-Karkhi was walking along with a group of his followers when a gang of youths came that way. They behaved outrageously all the way to the Tigris. "Master," his companions asked him, "pray to Almighty God to drown them all, that the world may be rid of their foul presence." "Lift up your hands," Ma'ruf bade them. Then he prayed. "O God, as Thou hast given them a happy life in this world, even so grant them a happy life in the world to come." "Master, we know not the secret of this prayer," said his companions in astonishment. "He with whom I am speaking knows the secret," Ma'ruf replied. "Wait a moment. Even now this secret will be revealed." When the youths beheld the Shaykh, they broke their lutes and poured away the wine they

were drinking. Trembling overcame them, and they fell before the Shaykh and repented. “You see,” Ma‘ruf remarked to his companions. “Your desire has been fulfilled completely, without drowning and without anyone suffering.”

DEMISE

He passed away on a Friday or Saturday, on the 2nd of Muharram, 200 Hijri. After his demise, Muhammad ibn Abu al-Husayn said that he saw Ma‘ruf al-Karkhi in his dream and he asked him how Almighty God had treated him. He said, “Almighty God pardoned me, not because of my piety but because of what I heard from Samak in Kufa, when he said, ’He who leaves all ties and turns towards God, then God sends his Mercy towards him and he turns all his servants in his direction.’ I followed this advice of his and turned completely towards God, and with the exception of the servitude to Ali al-Rida I left everything else.”

Sirri Saqti says, “I dreamt that Ma‘ruf al-Karkhi was seated totally absorbed in the love of God, under the throne and Almighty God said, ‘O Angels! Who is this?’ the Angels said, ‘O God You are All Knowing. There is nothing hidden from you.’ Almighty God said, ‘This is Ma‘ruf al-Karkh who is drowned in My love and closeness and until he does not see me, he will not regain his consciousness and neither will he gain contentment without his sight upon me.’”

HIS SHRINE

His shrine is in Baghdad Iraq. Sirri Saqti says, “When you are faced with any difficulty, then say, “O Allah! Assist me through the Sadqa (charity) of Ma‘ruf Al-Karkhi.” All your problems shall be solved (God willing).”

QUOTES & SAYINGS

1. Obedience to the carnal soul is the giving up of God.

2. The adorer of God is His lover and whom he makes His lover, doors of blessedness are made open to him and doors of evil are shut to him.

3. Immodest talk is sign of going astray, and to remain conscious is the sign of knowing the Truth.

4. The quest for paradise without good deeds, hope for intercession without adherence to Sunnah, and hope for Divine blessing after disobedience is foolishness.

5. Realizing verities and subtleties (Haqaiq and Daqaiq) as true and to explain them to people is pure Tasawwuf.

6. Ignoring the results of evil consequences one should not talk of good and ill of others.

7. He who remains indifferent to worldly enticement will relish Divine love. This love is based on Divine grace.

8. Gnostics are a treasure mine of wealth within themselves. They need not any other riches.

9. He who trusts in God, remains secure from the evils of the people.

10. Beware! Allah sees you all the times.

11. Love is a Divine favour bestowed by God on His real devotees. It is not to be learnt from men; it is one of God's gifts and comes as a grace.

12. A true servant of God is a God intoxicated saint who sees nothing except his Beloved.

13. The saints of God are known by three sings: their thought are of God, their dwelling is in God and their business is with God.

14. Those who attain the knowledge of God, live in Eternal Bliss. If the gnostic (Arif) has no bliss, he himself is in every bliss.

15. There are three signs of generosity- to keep faith without resistance, to praise without being incited and to give without being asked.

16. That person is not a faithful slave who does not enjoy the lash of his master; his claims of being honest are false.

17. When a believer occupies himself with things that do not concern him, it is a sign of God's wrath upon him.

18. To discuss a matter which is not beneficial to anyone is a sign of going astray.

19. Shut your eye from everyone and don't cast it with evil intention i.e., don't cast a lustful glance.

20. Love is such an entity which is neither learnt nor taught.

21. That foundation which is imperishable is 'justice', that bitterness which results in sweetness is 'patience', and that sweetness which results in bitterness, is sensuality. The disease which is incurable is foolishness.

22. The affliction or calamity from which people should flee is merriment.

23. Idol worship is outer polytheism and trust in the creatures is inner infidelity.

24. Satan loves the miserly Muslim and hates the generous sinner.

25. The amount of damage, in the companionship of rich people, is beyond measure. Flee from them.

26. He was asked: “What is the solution for worldly tribulations?” He answered, remoteness from the public and nearness to the Almighty.

27. He who does a good act for the sake of recompense, is a trader; he who does a good act for the fear of Hellfire is a slave who fears beating by the hand of his master, and he who does a good act for the pleasure of the Lord, is one that is liberated.

28. To have relationship with the sinner is to affirm his sinful acts and to conform with the sin is equal to sin.

29. If the belief is not perfect, worship too is worthless.

30. You in your state of richness think of yourself as lover of God, but when calamity descends, you flee from Him. To persevere in the wake of affliction is the sign of sincere love with God and His Prophet.

Hazrat Mu'in al-Din Chishti

Hazrat Shaykh Khawaja Syed Mu'in al-Din Hasan Chishti

Order: Chishti

Born: 530 AH/1136 AD Isfahan or Sistan (Modern-day Iran)

Passed away: 627 AH/1230 AD Ajmer, India

Resting place: Ajmer, India

Hazrat Sheikh Khwaja Syed Moinuddin Hasan Chishti (ra), also known as Gharib Nawaz (Benefactor of the Poor) was one of the most outstanding saints of the Indian subcontinent, and indeed an international spiritual inspiration who lived during the 6th

Century AH (12th Century AD). He introduced and established the Chishti order in South Asia and significantly contributed to the spreading of Islam there.

FAMILY & LINEAGE

Khwaja Mu'in al-Din Chishti (ra) was both a Hasani (maternal) and Husayni (paternal) Syed.

He was blessed with direct lineage to the Holy Prophet ﷺ through his father, Khwaja Ghiyasuddin Hasan (ra), who was a direct descendant of Hazrat Husayn, son of Hazrat Ali.

His father, an accomplished man, was well-educated and trained, and a great Sufi of his time. His piety and scholarship won him widespread respect and regard, and was held in high esteem by the Sufis of Khorasan.

Khwaja Mu'in al-Din Chishti (ra) was also blessed with direct lineage to the Holy Prophet ﷺ through his mother, Umm al-Warah (ra), who was a descendant of Hazrat Hasan.

His great grandfather, Khwaja Syed Ahmad Husain, migrated from Samarra in Iraq and eventually settled in Sanjar, within the region of Sistan.

He was also closely related to al-Ghawth al-A'zam, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra).

It is also said that he had two brothers.

BIRTH

Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra) was born in Sanjar within the region of Sistan in modern-day Iran. Another source says he was born in Isfahan. He was born in 530 AH (1136 AD).

At the time of his birth, Sistan and its surrounding lands were experiencing unprecedented bloodshed and plunder at the hands of Tatars, and other rebels. These intruders had taken advantage of the weak government of Sultan Ahmed Sanjar.

Due to these disturbances in Sistan, Khwaja Ghiyasuddin Hasan (ra), father of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra), decided to leave Sistan for a safer place. He migrated with his family to Khorasan. It was a great hub of intellectual and economic activity and was home to learned Ulama and reputed Sufis. There were rich gardens and canals along with flourishing agricultural fields. Khwaja Ghiyasuddin Hasan (ra) settled down in the vicinity where he bought an orchard along with a windmill.

EARLY LIFE

During his childhood he showed early promise of a marvelous personality, displaying rare piety and sacrifice for others.

On the occasion of a certain Eid, when he was still a child, Hazrat Moinuddin Chishti (ra), richly attired, was going to Idgah to offer his prayers. On the way, he saw a blind child dressed in torn clothing. Deeply moved, he gave the child his own clothes and accompanied him to the Idgah. When only three or four years old, rather than playing with children of his age, he would invite these children to eat with him.

Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra) was brought up in Khorasan and received his early education at home. When he was nine years old, he committed the Holy Quran to memory. Subsequently, he was admitted to a Maktab, where he concentrated primarily on the Hadiths and Fiqh (jurisprudence), and completed his education very early.

Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra) was about fifteen years old when his father died in 544 AH. He was extremely heart-broken. Prior to his father's death, the Tatar invaders had
entered Khorasan and ransacked the province. Hardly a year had passed since the death of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti's (ra) father, when the Tartars once more ransacked Khorasan and repeated the same drama. He was overwhelmingly dismayed to see these scenes of terrible devastation.

TURNING POINT

One day, when he was watering his garden, between the months of Sha'ban and Dhul-Hijjah in the year 544 AH/1150 AD, a mystic named Ibrahim Qanduzi (ra) unexpectedly entered. Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra) extended to him the utmost courtesy and a hearty welcome, and offered him a bunch of grapes. The mystic was greatly pleased by the hospitality and the respect shown to him and wanted to repay Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra). He took out a piece of oil cake and upon chewing a portion of it, gave the rest to Khwaja Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra) to eat. As soon as he had eaten it, he underwent a strange transformation. He felt repugnance for mundane matters and sought to pursue the higher virtues and seek out the truth.

After the death of his father, he had inherited a grindstone and the orchard, which constituted his source of income. He sold his grindstone and the orchard and distributed the proceeds of these amongst the needy, the indigent, and the poor.

SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

In those days, Baghdad, Samarkand, and Bukhara were celebrated centres of Islamic learning. From Khorasan he proceeded to Samarkand and then to Bukhara, where he pursued higher studies. He stayed there for about five years, from 544 AH/1150AD up to 550 AH/1155AH continuing his education up to the age of twenty. He counted among his teachers the two outstanding scholars of his time, namely, Maulana Husamuddin of Bukhara (ra) and Maulana Sharfuddin (ra).

When Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra) had acquired the best knowledge and wisdom of the time, he travelled widely in search of a spiritual guide who could provide him with the best spiritual guidance.

He reached Iraq in 551 AH/1156 AD where he met the renowned saint Hazrat Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra), better known as al-Ghawth al-A'zam, in Baghdad for the first time. On meeting Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti (ra), Hazrat Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani's (ra) forecast for him was:

"This young man will be a great figure of his time. He will be a source of inspiration and a centre of devotion and the focus of affection to myriads of people."

The prophecy proved correct.

Subsequently, Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra) left Iraq for Arabia, and from there he proceeded to Haroon in Iran. In Haroon, he had the unique privilege of meeting the famous saint Hazrat Khwaja Usman Haruni (ra), who accepted him as his spiritual disciple.

He spent two and a half years in the company and service of Hazrat Khwaja Usman Haruni (ra), acquiring spiritual attainments and undertaking ascetic practices, and eventually won the approval of his spiritual guide and teacher. He was given the permission to enlist and accept disciples himself and was appointed a spiritual caliph.

He left Haroon for Baghdad, where he met Sheikh Abu Najib Suhrawardi (ra). In 555 AH/1160 AD, he travelled to Syria where he met a saint called Ohad Mahmud Al-Wahidi Ghaznavi. He then proceeded to Kerman and from there he returned to Baghdad, and then proceeded to Hamedan.

On his way to India, he visited Tabriz, Astarabad, Bukhara, Kharqan, Samarkand, Memna, and Herat. He finally reached Multan on the tenth of Muharram of 561 AH/1165 AD. He then left Multan for Lahore where he spent time at the tomb of Hazrat Sheikh Ali Hujwiri (ra) better known as Data Ganj Bakhsh.

On his return journey, he visited Ghazni, Balkh, Astarabad, and Rey. On reaching Baghdad, he offered his respect to his spiritual guide and teacher Hazrat Khwaja Usman Harooni (ra), who was then in Baghdad.

INITIATION AS A DISCIPLE A SECOND TIME

Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra) himself describes the details of his being initiated as a spiritual disciple a second time in the following words:

"I, Moin al-Din Hasan of Sanjar, well-wisher of all the faithful, had the honour of meeting His Holiness Hazrat Khwaja Usman of Haroon in the mosque of Khwaja Junaid in Baghdad. His Holiness was surrounded by inspired dervishes.

When this humble being bowed low in due deference, my spiritual guide and teacher Hazrat Khwaja Usman of Haroon asked me to offer two genuflections. I did.

Then His Holiness asked me to sit with my face towards the Kaaba. He asked me, next, to recite Surah al-Baqarah. I did as I was asked to do.

Further, His Holiness commanded me to recite benedictions to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) twenty-one times. I obeyed.

Then His Holiness stood up and, holding my hand in his, lifted his face towards the sky and said to me: 'Come, let me cause thee to reach God.'

Subsequently, taking out a miqraz, turned it around on the head of this humble being and placed on my head the four-edged cap and bestowed on me the robe. Then he asked me to sit. I sat. He addressed me thus: 'It is the custom with us that a new entrant has to go through asceticism for one day and one night. Thou shouldst complete it in this one day and night.' I obeyed. Next day, when I attended upon him, His Holiness asked me to sit down and recite Surah al-Ikhlas (Purity of Faith) four thousand times. I did that.

He asked me, next, to look towards the sky. I did. His Holiness asked me: 'How far dost thou see?' I replied: 'Up to the Great Throne.'

Next, he asked me to look towards the ground. I did, He asked me 'How far dost thou see?' I replied: 'Up to the Antipodes.'

Next, he asked me to recite Surah al-Ikhlas (Purity of Faith), again, a thousand times. I did. He asked me to look towards the sky again. I did. He asked me: 'How far dost thou see now?' I replied: 'Up to the Great Hidden.'

He asked me next to close my eyes. I did. He asked me to open my eyes. I did.

Then, showing his two fingers, he asked me:' What dost thou see therein?'

I replied: 'Eighteen thousand worlds.'

Later, pointing towards a brick ahead, he asked me to pick it up. When I did, I found a handful of dinars therein. He said to me: 'Go and distribute them amongst the needy and the poor.' I complied. When I went to him subsequently, he said to me: 'Live in our company for some time.' I replied: 'I am at your service, Sir.'"

HAJJ

Khwaja Mu'in al-Din Chishti (ra) accompanied his spiritual guide and teacher wherever he went. They left Baghdad for Makkah, and on their way, they stayed for some time in Fallujah. About the visit to Makkah, Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra) himself says:

"Having reached Makkah, we were honoured by the glorious vision of the Ka'ba and by going around it. My spiritual guide and teacher here, too, took my hand in his and entrusted it to God Almighty. He prayed for my humble self in Kaaba. A voice was heard to the effect that: 'We have accepted Mu'in al-Din.'
Then we reached Medina. We offered our respects at the Court of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. My spiritual guide and teacher said to me: 'Make thy respectful Salaams.' I offered my reverential Salaams.

A voice came out saying: 'Peace be on you also, O Head of the Pious of the Earth and the Sea.' On hearing this, my spiritual guide said to me: 'Now indeed thou hast reached perfection.

Leaving Medina, they stopped in Osh, Badakhshan,
and Bukhara on their way to Baghdad. After staying in Baghdad for some time, Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra) once again accompanied his spiritual guide and teacher on his tours and travels, visiting Osh, Siwistan, and Damascus.

Khwaja Mu'in al-Din Chishti (ra) met Hazrat Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) in Gail a second time in 581 AH/1185 AD and stayed with him for fifty-seven days.

INITIATION INTO THE SPIRITUAL ORDER

After having served his spiritual guide teacher on tours and travels for twenty years, Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra) was separated from him in Baghdad, when he was fifty-two years of age.

On this occasion, Hazrat Khwaja Usman Harooni (ra) appointed him as his Sajjada Nashin, his spiritual successor, and conveyed to him the holy relics of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Of this Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra) himself says:

"My spiritual guide and teacher gave me the stick that was placed before him and then honoured me by confiding to me the robe, sandals, stick and the prayer carpet. Then addressing me said thus:

'These holy relics are the sacred possessions of our spiritual ancestors, which we have received from the Holy Prophet Mohammad ﷺ and I have given them to thee. Thou shouldst keep them with thee, as we have done. Whomsoever thou mayest find a real seeker, entrust them to him. Do not hold any hope from the people. Live far from the people and aloof from the public and do not demand or ask anything from anybody.'

Having said these words, my spiritual guide and teacher embraced me and kissed my head and eyes and said: 'I have entrusted thee to God.' Then he went into trance and I departed."

SPIRITUAL CHAIN

His spiritual chain is traced back to the Beloved Prophet ﷺ as follows:

- Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Hassan Chishti (ra), disciple of
- Hazrat Khwaja Usman–e-Harooni (ra), disciple of
- Hazrat Haji Sharif Zindani (ra), disciple of

- Hazrat Khwaja Qutubudin Modood Chishti (ra), disciple of
- Hazrat Khwaja Nasir Uddin Abu Yousuf Chishti (ra), disciple of
- Hazrat Khwaja Abu Mohammed Chishti (ra), disciple of
- Hazrat Khwaja Abu Ahmed Abdal Chishti (ra), disciple of
- Hazrat Khwaja Abu Ishaq Shami Chishti (ra), disciple of
- Hazrat Mumshad Uluvi Deenwari (ra), disciple of
- Hazrat Khwaja Aminuddin Habeera (ra), disciple of
- Hazrat Khwaja Huzaefa Marashi (ra), dsciple of
- Hazrat Khwaja Ibrahim ibn Adham Balkhi (ra), disciple of
- Hazrat Khwaja Fudayl ibn Ayad (ra), disciple of
- Hazrat Khwaja Abdul Wahid bin Zaid (ra), disciple of
- Hazrat Khwaja Imam Hasan Basri (ra), disciple of
- Hazrat Sayyidina Hazrat Ali, son-in law of
- The Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ

HAJJ AND THE PROPHET'S ﷺ COMMAND

Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra), after receiving the robe of Caliphate from his spiritual guide and teacher, left on tours and travels again. He first reached Osh and then moved on to Isfahan where he met Sheikh Mahmud of Isfahan. He gave the clothes that he was wearing to Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki (ra), implying that he had accepted him as his spiritual disciple.

Thereafter, Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki (ra) accompanied him on tours and travels in the year 583 AH/1187 AH. Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra) left Isfahan for Makkah the same year. One day when he was absorbed in prayers in the Kaaba, he heard a voice saying:

"O, Mu'in al-Din! We are greatly pleased with thee. Thou art given salvation. Ask for anything thou mayest like, so that we may grant that to thee.

He respectfully responded:

"O, Great God! Grant salvation to the followers and disciples of Mu'in al-Din."

He received the reply:

O, Mu'in al-Din! Thou art our accepted one. I will give salvation to thy followers and disciples and also to those who may enter thy fold till the Day of Resurrection."

After paying respects to the Kaaba and performing the Hajj he reached Madinah and devoted himself to prayers in the Kaaba Mosque. During his stay, he received a mandate from the Court of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to the effect:

"O, Mu'in al-Din! Thou art a helper of my religion. I entrust to thee the country of Hindustan. There prevails darkness. Proceed to Ajmer and spread there the Gospel of Truth."

He was immensely pleased with this mandate but wondered where Ajmer was situated. In the meanwhile, he was consumed with drowsiness. He was blessed by seeing the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in a dream who showed him the city, the fort, and the situation of Ajmer. He was bid farewell and was given a pomegranate from heaven.

Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra) reached Baghdad and moved on to Chisht on his way to Herat. From Herat, he proceeded to Sabzevar, which was ruled by Yadgar Mohammed, who also became his spiritual disciple.

He left Sabzevar and reached Shadman Fort, and then left for Lahore via Multan. He then proceeded to Delhi and stopped on the way at Samana (in the Patiala district), and from there, reached Ajmer for the first time in 587AH/1191 AD. He had forty followers with him.

KHWAJA MU'IN AL-DIN CHISHTI (RA) IN AJMER

At that time, Ajmer was ruled by Prithvi Raj Chauhan, the famous Rajput King. In Ajmer, he wanted to stay at the site where the Auliya mosque is now situated but the servants of Prithvi Raj Chauhan did not allow him to do so on the pretext that the camels of Prithvi Raj Chauhan usually sat there. Khwaja Mu'in al-Din Chishti (ra) thereupon countered: "If the camels sit there, let

them sit." He then stayed on a Hill close to Ana Sagar lake and occupied the site now known as Chillah Khwaja Sahib. The camels returned to their usual place and sat there as usual, but once they sat, they were unable to stand up again. The Raja was informed. All the camel-drivers tendered an unconditional apology. Khwaja Mu'in al-Din Chishti (ra), accepting the apology said: "Well, go. The camels now stand." When they returned, they saw the camels were standing.

When the news spread that a very pious dervish had come to Ajmer, people began to flock to him in increasing numbers. Whoever came to him, received the kindest treatment and blessings. People were so much inspired by his divine teachings and simplicity that they began to embrace Islam. Many became his disciples.

Meanwhile, Shahabuddin Muhammad Ghori again attacked India, in 1192 AD, and in the famous Battle of Tarain, defeated Prithvi Raj Chauhan. When Shahabuddin Muhammad Ghori came to know of the presence of Khwaja Mu'in al-Din Chishti (ra) at Ajmer, he personally came to see him and enjoyed the grace of his meeting.

Khwaja Mu'in al-Din Chishti (ra) left Ajmer for some time and returned again to Ajmer in 588AH/1191 AD. He left for Baghdad in 598 AH/1200 AD and on reaching Balkh, he accepted Maulana Ziauddin (ra) as his spiritual disciple. He visited Ajmer a third time in 602 AH/1206 AD and once again in 610 AH/1213 AD.

He visited Delhi twice during the reign of Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish. He reached Delhi in 611AH/1214 AD and stayed in

the Khanqah of Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki (ra), and during his stay, he conferred a robe on to Fariduddin Ganjshakar.

When his spiritual guide and teacher, Hazrat Khwaja Usman Harooni (ra), paid a visit to Delhi, Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra) requested that "some calm, quiet and secluded place may be chosen for his permanent abode and stay," to which His Holiness responded: "O, Moinuddin! Live in my company for some time once again so that thou mayest acquire spiritual powers through the constancy of my training and preaching and after that permanently settle in Ajmer." The renowned poet of Shiraz, Sheikh Sa'di (ra) came to Delhi at that time and had the privilege of meeting both the saints.

Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra) once again visited Delhi in 621AH/1224 AD at the request of a certain farmer, who implored him to ask the king to set aside the order of confiscation of the produce of his land passed by a certain officer.

He wanted to take Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki (ra) with him to Ajmer as Sheikh Najmuddin Sughra (ra) had complained to him that the presence of Qutb Sahab in Delhi eclipsed his importance and prestige, but when implored by the high and the low of Delhi not to do so, permitted him to remain in Delhi and entrusted the city to his care. He himself returned to Ajmer. Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra) continued his noble magnificent mission, showing the Path of Truth to the people. He also sent his disciples and successors to the different part of the country who also served the people and preached the tenets of Islam.

MIRACLES

It has been recorded that Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra) performed more than 5,000 miracles during his stay in India and in the countries he visited in the Middle East and Arabia.

WIVES & CHILDREN

Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra) married at an advanced age in obedience to the commandment of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He married twice.

FIRST MARRIAGE

When he had settled down in Ajmer, Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra) had a dream in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ appeared in 590 AH/1194 AD. The Prophet ﷺ said, "O Moinuddin, you are a great preceptor of our religion. You should not depart from our 'Sunnah'" (meaning marriage which is incumbent upon every Muslim under the laws of Shariah).

He married Bibi Ummat-ullah and they had three children:

1. Khwaja Fakhruddin (ra)
2. Khwaja Husamuddin (ra)
3. Bibi Hafiza Jamal (ra)

SECOND MARRIAGE

His second marriage was with Bibi Asmat (ra), daughter of Syed Wajihuddin Mashhadi (ra) who was the commissioner of Ajmer in 620 AH/1223 AD. The marriage resulted in the birth of Hazrat Khwaja Ziauddin Abu Sa'id (ra).

PASSING ON

On Monday the sixth of Rajab in 627 AH (21 May 1230 AH) he closed the door of his tenement and instructed his attending devotees not to disturb him that night. Throughout the night the people outside heard a mystic sound emerge from it, a sound of ecstasy. At the approach of dawn, all was silent.

When the door remained closed at the time of morning prayers, his devotees and disciples thought this was strange. The door was opened, and there he lay. The following sentence in Arabic was radiantly glittering on his forehead: "He was a beloved of God and he died in the love of God." (Hadha Habib-Allah, Mata Fi Hubb-Allah).

NAMES & TITLES

He is addressed by various titles, amongst which are:

- Qutb-ul-Mashaikh Barro Behr (Lord of the land and the sea)
- Habib Allah (Beloved of God)
- Ata-e-Rasul (Gift of the Prophet)
- Khwaja-e-Ajmer (Khwaja of Ajmer)
- Khwaja-e-Buzurg (Great Khwaja)

- Hind-ul-Wali (Saint of India)
- Gharib Nawaz (Patron of the poor)
- Sultan-ul-Hind (Spiritual Sovereign of India)
- Naib-e-Rasul-fil-Hind (Deputy of the Prophet in India)
- Aftab-e-Jahan (Sun of the World)
- Panah-e-Bekasan (Shelter of the Helpless)
- Daleel-ul-Arefeen (Argument of the Enlightened)

HIS CHARACTER

Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra) was very fond of music and fell unconscious in a state of rapture when listening to it. He always appeared to be solemn and sad, and had the utmost respect and regard for his spiritual guide and teacher. Very absorbed, he kept his eyes closed when lost in contemplation, but opened them at prayer time. He followed the precepts of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in everyday life. Fear of God would cause him to tremble and weep and the dread of the last resting place, the grave, also dominated his thoughts. Sometimes he felt in an elevated mood and was then so much absorbed and lost in meditation that he was quite unmindful of what was going on around him. At other times, he was consumed by a pensive mood, and then he would close the door of his tenement in order to devote himself to contemplation.

He had a forgiving nature and showed love, regard, and respect to all, irrespective of caste, creed, or religion. He was

cosmopolitan in outlook, and a man of generous disposition, taking pleasure in helping the poor and the needy.

He was renowned for his hospitality and entertained the people. Myriads of people of the city, with no ostensible means of subsistence, depended upon his *langar* (free distribution of food). He himself ate very little, fasting throughout the year, and wore patched clothes. Very fond of prayers, he would read the Quran twice a day. He took no rest or respite for seventy long years and was very particular about his ablutions.

He showed utmost concern for the well-being of his spiritual disciples and was greatly loved by his spiritual guide and teacher Hazrat Khwaja Usman Harooni (ra) who said of him: "Our Moinuddin is a beloved of God and I feel proud of the fact that he is my disciple."

He took to renunciation and self-abnegation.

TEACHINGS

Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (ra) was a source of inspiration and illumination and his discourses reveal great spiritual insight. They are contained in a book entitled Daleel-ul-Arefeen written by his premier caliph and Sajjada Nashin Hazrat Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki of Osh (ra).

Mysticism and mystics

He says that "Mysticism is a name and not a custom." By merely being conversant with and studying mysticism, one does not

become a Sufi. It is the inner life that marks one out as a mystic. A mystic must have an exact understanding of divine knowledge. He should surrender his will to the Will of God. He should be kind, hospitable, and courteous, devoid of any trace of haughtiness or arrogance or superiority. He should be content, meek and gentle, reposing his utmost trust in God. The ambition to win disciples and to win applause or fame is foolish and vain. On the contrary, the essential ambition should be to be nearer to the Friend and to be accepted by the Friend.

Discipleship

He says that a disciple must submit his whole self and will to his spiritual guide and teacher. He observed:

"The spiritual disciple should by earnestly following and obeying his spiritual guide, try to reach the place where the spiritual guide himself becomes the comb of his disciple."

A spiritual disciple then should have as his motto, service, love of, obedience to, and faith in his spiritual guide and teacher in order to attain perfection.

Spiritual Guide

As regards the spiritual guide, he says that he, indeed, is a guide, friend, and philosopher to his disciple, for his moral, spiritual, and ethical development.

Love

According to Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti (ra):

"The path of love is such, that he who treads on it, loses his name and identity. Love is all-embracing and all-pervading: the lover's heart is a fireplace of love. Whatever comes in it is burnt and becomes annihilated. There is no fire greater in intensity than the fire of love. The sign of true love is manifested in obedience to and the fear of the Friend."

As regards the repentance of lovers, he says that this is of three kinds.

1. Firstly, it is due to shame
2. Secondly to avoid sin
3. Thirdly to purify themselves by purging cruelty and enmity from within themselves

Genuine love rules out the idea of treating the Friend with a reserve. The springs of love are in God and not in us. Hence, love is divine.

Prayer

He emphasises the importance of prayer and says that it is a great necessity for the development of the soul.

He does not restrict prayer in its implications, expressions, and meaning, giving a broad connotation to the word "prayer." According to him, prayer consists in selfless service, sympathy, and fellow-feeling. Thus, helping the weak, the aggrieved, the needy, to feed the hungry, and to have the captive freed all constitute prayers.

He says that to see six things constitutes prayer for the mystic:

1. To see one's own parents in the morning and say Salaam to them
2. To see one's own children with love and affection
3. To see the Holy Quran
4. To see the face of the learned with respect
5. To see the gate of Kaaba
6. To look towards the face of one's own spiritual guide and teacher and to devote oneself to his service

The Enlightened

According to him, fear, respect, and shyness are the three things that go to make one enlightened.

The perfection of the enlightened depends upon the loss of the self. An enlightened being is said to be perfect only when all barriers separating him and the Friend are dismantled. Either he must live (in case, he does not to give up himself) or the Friend

(when all barriers are removed and there is no separate self anymore).

Renunciation

He lays great emphasis on renunciation, holding that the object should be to have no objective. To lose an objective is to gain the objective.

A perfect dervish should remove from his heart the stain, stress and the burden of anything and everything. He should not give place in his heart to anything and anyone except God Almighty alone. He should not pursue any other object. He should desire nothing except God.

Fasting

According to him, the real fast is the renunciation of all religious and worldly desires.

Music

He says that there are three conditions attached to Sama' (spiritual music for Zikr); these relating to time, place, and community of interest.

It is through Sama' that the nearness of God is achieved. It confers love on the heart, it gives sincerity to the head, unity to the soul, service to the body, and vision to the eye.

SAYINGS

1. The heart of a lover (the true devotee of God) constantly burns with the fire of love so much so that whatever (passion) intrudes upon its sanctity is burnt to ashes.

2. When the river pursues its course, the flow occasions force and noise, but when it ultimately merges into the sea, it rest in supreme peace. The same is true of the individual self covering various stages on its onward journey to merge itself in the Universal Self.

3. He indeed is a true devotee, blessed with the love of God, who is gifted with the following three attributes:

1. River-like charity, i.e. his sense of charity has no limits and is equally beneficial to all the creatures of God who approach him,
2. Sun like affection, i.e. his affection may be extended indiscriminately to all like sunlight and
3. Earth-like hospitality, i.e. his loving embrace may be open to all like that of the earth.

4. The association with the pious and godly persons is better even than doing a good deed, and the association with ungodly and vicious people is worse than doing an evil act.

5. A sin committed does not harm an individual so much as the looking down with contempt upon one's own fellow beings.

6. The estate of a hermit settles upon him who has no earthly belongings which might excite his sense of attachment.

7. Realization of God comes to him who keeps vigilance and forgets recollection of 'Self'.

8. The test of a true devotee's mind is that it is always, and to all intents, strictly obedient to the will of God and is constantly afraid of behaving in a manner which is apt to displease Him resulting in the withdrawal of His grace.

9. A seer of the 'essence of things' is characteristically mute and meditative.

10. It is an elevated stage on the path leading to the realization of God that the seeker of the goal can witness the Universe and its panorama through his two fingers only.

11. Concentration on the implications of drawing and discharging breath is a part of the seer's (Arif's) worship.

12. Of all the worship, the worship that pleases the Almighty God most is the grant of relief to the humble and the oppressed.

13. He is hardened sinner who commits sin and yet simultaneously entertains the belief that he is one of God's 'chosen few'.

14. The Arif or seer is always over head and ears in the ocean of happiest expectation. If he stands up, the guiding force is the love of the 'friend' (God); if he sits down it is to meditate over His glory and if he sleeps, it is the sweet remembrance of Him which lulls him to rest.

15. He is the knower of the path of love (of God) who relinquishes a attachment to both the worlds.

16. The highly prized gift for a dervish is his association with other dervishes, while his greatest loss is to remain away from them.

17. Patience is tested through resignation to sorrow, sufferings and disaster without murmur or disclosing one's pains to others.

18. The more one learns about the 'essence of things' the more one wonders.

19. The seer regards death as a friend, luxury as an enemy and the constant narration or remembrance of God as a glory.

20. Knowledge is comprised unto an unfathomable ocean and enlightenment is like a wave in it; then what is the relation of God

and man? While the ocean of knowledge is sustained by God alone, the enlightenment pertains to man.

21. Those having insight into the 'essence of things' are endowed with light like the sun and they impart illumination to the whole world.

22. Without saying prayer, in other words without performing Namaz, none can approach God because Namaz is the climax in the process of such approach for the pious.

23. There are four cardinal virtues of the individual self: Firstly, refraining from begging in the state of penury. Secondly, showing the attitude of the well-fed when feeling hungry. Thirdly, maintaining cheerfulness in the time of sorrow, and fourthly, befriending the enemy.

24. By attaining perfection in the observation of Islamic Law (Shariah) through a pious conduct, one reaches the stage of the path leading to Divinity (Tariqah), and then onward he passes on to enlightenment (Ma'rifah) and lastly to the attainment of the high point of human existence (Haqiqah).

25. The soul of him who perform ablution before going to bed always soars high in the heaven ('Arsh), taking a bird's eye view of the lower regions.

26. Namaz is like a trust committed to human care by God, and as such it should be zealously guarded. Namaz is the climax or destination of the faithful, and lastly Namaz is secret relationship existing between the worshipper and the worshipped.

27. Even the angels in the heaven pray for him who, having performed his morning Namaz remains sitting there engaged in the meditation of God.

28. Incessant recitation of praise of God (Alhamd Sharif or Te Deum) is the infallible remedy for the fulfilment of one's needs.

29. The graveyard is the place for picking up a lesson. In such a solemn surrounding, one should not indulge in laughing or burst into laughter or eat or drink or do any other worldly thing.

30. In the matter of realization of God and Self, no distinction in made between an Arif and a Salik; they both reach the same and identical destination.

31. God rains misfortune and misery upon the heads of those whom He loves.

32. It is a pious act to look at God's scripture (Quran), greater is the piety in reciting it even if it be but one letter. It will banish ten vices and enable ten virtues being recorded in lieu. It improves the eyesight and will impart immunity to the eyes against all

mishaps.

33. A devotional approach to the saint and friendship with dervishes attract blessings from the High.

34. The devotional visit to God's Kaaba is as good a reward as one thousand years of worship and devotion to God. The piety resulting from the Hajj itself is over and above this.

35. To cast a devotional look towards one's Pir and to serve him faithfully are comparable to the devotion to God.

36. The best way of evading the fire of hell lies in feeding the hungry, providing water to the thirsty, removing the wants of the needy and befriending the miserable.

37. It amounts to devotion and worship on the part of a son to cast a look on the faces of his parents. All the sins committed by the son who kisses the feet of his parents are extinguished. Khwaja Bayazid Bastami (May God's peace and grace be upon him) once said, "Whatever position of distinction I have attained, it is a legacy bestowed upon me by my parents.

38. He is an Arif or seer who is visited every day by a hundred thousand flashes of light (inspiration) from the Heaven.

39. He is an Arif whom unseen wisdom enlightens to enable him to reveal mysteries to solve all thorny problems and meet all arguments successfully. He is always swimming in the ocean of interpretation and is capable of extraction the pearl of secrets and of 'light' and to present it to those who are competent enough to test its genuineness.

40. Just as the sunshine increases gradually in the morning so does the Divine Light expand in one who says Ishraq prayers.

41. One of the sings of an Arif is that he remains characteristically smiling at all times.

42. When the Arif meditates over a thing, he attains a state of absorption in which even if thousands of angels assuming wonderful forms try to attract him, he would remain entirely undisturbed for the time being.

43. For an Arif it is an ordinary miracle that he ascends beyond the Heaven by taking only one step and reaches the 'Veil of Divine Glory'. But God alone knows the secret implications of that stage. He cannot say where it leads him ultimately to, and what he perceives in that mysterious state when he returns.

44. The mouth of a human being is regarded as sanctified irrespective of his personality, i.e. be it that of a true and faithful Muslim (Mu'min), or an unbeliever (Kafir), be he purified or

impure.

45. If all the rules of prayer are not followed properly, it is struck back on the face of him who offers such a prayer (Hadith).

46. Prayer is a pledge between a Mu'min and God. Its faithful discharge leads to redemption. If it is not discharged faithfully, the defaulter would not be able to show his face to God on the Day of Judgment.

47. Offer your repentance quickly before death arrives and hurry up to perform the Namaz before its final hour passes.

48. It is greatest sin not to perform the obligatory prayer at its proper and appointed time or to say two obligatory prayers simultaneously at one and the same time.

49. The Almighty God will erect on the Day of Judgment curtains the thickness of which will take 500 years to cross over between the hell and the man who feeds a hungry person.

50. That man is a true devotee of God who resigns with pleasure to the misfortune that comes from his Beloved (i.e. God).

51. For the seer or dervish who follows the true path, it is the greatest sin if his heart does not melt with the fear of God when the name of God is uttered before him, or when Quran is recited

before him.

52. It is incumbent on the follower of the path leading to Divinity (Tariqah) that he must first divorce or renounce the physical world, and then the second world thereafter and ultimately his own 'self' (Nafs), when alone he can pursue his right path, failing which he should abandon the enterprise of Sufism.

53. For a follower of the path of Truth, it is worse than a sin to disdain or look down upon anyone.

54. The stage of perfection in knowledge of the realization of God (Irfan) is reached when the seer enlightens the hearts of other people with the Divine Light.

55. The Arif is defined as one who banishes all thoughts from his mind and indulges in only one pointed meditation of God's glory in order to acquire nearness with Him and who is Himself One without second.

56. When the Arif becomes silent it means that he is talking to God, and when he closes his eyes it means that he is knocking at God's door.

57. The path of Love (of God) is such a path that whoever stepped into it, he lost himself.

58. Those who are true lovers of God give away both of the worlds for the sake of their Beloved and even then they feel that they have done nothing whatsoever.

59. Three things are dearer than all other things in the world. Firstly, the savant who says according to what he has digested; secondly, the person who does not succumb to avarice; and thirdly, the Arif who is always singing the praises and glory of his Beloved (God).

60. There are no rituals or ceremonies to be performed in Sufism, nor are there academical dissertations which may be easily acquired by reading, but, according to men who are lovers of God and the Sheikhs of Tariqah, Sufism means scrupulously maintained moral behaviour which one must observe towards all he creatures of God.

61. The resignation of the Arif is indicated in his reposing unflinching faith in the mercy and grace of God and God alone, and that he should not be attracted to anyone else.

62. Only two things are enough for one desirous of establishing himself on the path of Tariqah:

1. Devotion to and worship of God and
2. Obeying His commandments.

63. Death is a bridge which expands the passage for a lover to reach his Beloved (God).

64. Love of God transcends and is above all passion for others.

65. According to those well-versed in the doctrines of the seeker of true path, penitence, or Toba, assumes shape in the combination of three things:

1. Moderation in food with the resolve of fasting,
2. Moderation in speech in order to save time for singing the praises of the Beloved (God) and
3. Moderation in sleep in the interest of reserving more time and energy for his devotion.

Hazrat Rabi'a al-Basri

Order: Unknown

Born: Circa 95-99 AH/713-717 AD Basra, Iraq

Passed away: Circa 180-85 AH/796-801 AD

Resting place: Basra, Iraq

Hazrat Rabi'a al-Adawiyya al-Qaysiyya (ra) also known as Rabi'a al-Basri was a Sufi saint from Iraq and is considered to be the first female Sufi Saint of Islam, the first in a long line of female Sufi mystics. She lived during the 8th Century and was born in Basra, a seaport in southern Iraq where she spent the vast majority of her life. Much of her early life is narrated by Hazrat Fariduddin Attar (ra), a later Sufi saint and poet, who used earlier sources. She did not leave any written works herself.

Hazrat Rabia Basri (ra) is remembered to this day as one of the greatest saints of the 8th century and is remembered with devotion and affection for her faith, piety and patience. The great

woman mystic, saint and Qalandar of Islam had conquered herself (Nafs) through devotion, meditation, contemplation, patience (Sabr) as well as fear and trust in God. (Tawwakul). Hazrat Rabia Basri (ra) was constantly absorbed in the thought of God and had reached the pinnacle of mystic path i.e Fina-Fillah.

PRAISE FROM HAZRAT FARIDUDDIN ATTAR (RA)

Hazrat Fariduddin Attar (ra) praises her unparalleled status as a female Sufi saint emphatically in the Conference of the Birds:

"No, she wasn't a single woman,

But a hundred men over:

Robed in the quintessence of pain

From foot to face, immersed in the Truth,

Effaced in the radiance of God,

And liberated from all superfluous excess."

He also praises Hazrat Rabia (ra) in his Tazkirat al-Awliyā (Memoirs of the Saints):

"That noble recluse who dwelled behind the cloisters of God's elect, a matron of sanctity beneath sincerity's veil, on fire with love, totally consumed with yearning, arduously enraptured by God's proximity, that apostle of Mary's purity, acknowledged by all men was Rabi'a al-Adawiyya God's mercy rest upon her."

He has also written, “Both in terms of her spiritual transactions (Mo’amalat) and gnosis of God (Ma’rifat) Rabia was unexcelled in her time and was accredited by all the great men of her age.”

BIRTH

Even though she is said to have belonged to the tribe of Al’Atik, whose lineage is traced back to Hazrat Nuh (as), Hazrat Rabia (ra) was born into a family of poor circumstances. Hazrat Fariduddin Attar (ra) relates her story in Tazkirat al-Awliyā: On the night Hazrat Rabia (ra) came into being it is related that there wasn’t even a wrapping on hand to swaddle her with, nor a lamp, nor a drop of oil to anoint her navel. Her father possessed three daughters and Hazrat Rabia (ra) was the fourth (al-Rabi’a); thus, was she named Rabia’. His wife told him: ‘Go to the neighbour’s house and ask them for a lamp and some oil.’ Although Hazrat Rabia’s (ra) father had already vowed not to ask anything of God’s creatures, he arose, went next door and then returned telling his wife only, They are all asleep.’ He then fell asleep, deeply grieved and heavy hearted and while he slept he dreamt that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ came to him and said:

“Do not be grieved. You have been blessed with a daughter who will be a great saint; her intercession will be wished for by seventy thousand of my community. Tomorrow send a letter to ‘Isa Radan, Amir of Basra, reminding him, by this sign, that every night he is wont to offer one hundred benedictions to me, and on Friday night, four hundred. But this Friday he has neglected me so tell him that, as a penance, he must give you a hundred

dinars."

Waking at dawn, Hazrat Rabia's (ra) father, in tears, noted his dream down in a letter, went to the court of 'Isa Radan, and handed it to a chamberlain to give to the Amir. After reading the letter, 'Isa Radan commanded that ten thousand dinars should be distributed to the poor as a thanksgiving offering since the Prophet deigned to mention me.' Ordering that four hundred dinars be given to Hazrat Rabia's (ra) father, he commented:

"Though I wish that such a person should come to me, rather I will come and sweep the dust from his doorstep with my beard. For God's sake though, whenever he is in need, please let me know."

And so Hazrat Rabia's (ra) father brought home the gold and spent it.

LIFE

After Hazrat Rabia's (ra) parents passed away, a severe famine arose in Basra, and all her sisters scattered while she fell into the hands of a cruel man who auctioned her off as a slave for a few dirhams. When a stranger approached her in the street one day, she became frightened and tried to flee but fell in the dust, breaking her wrist. Prostrating herself in the mud, she confessed:

"O God, I am a stranger, without father or mother; I have been sold in bondage, and now my wrist is broken. But despite all this, I am not distressed about anything that has befallen me. I only wish you to be content, so that I might know if I have gained your satisfaction or not."

She then heard an unseen voice tell her:

"Do not mourn, for in the hereafter you will reach such a rank that even those nearest to God in heaven will be proud of your station."

Hazrat Rabia (ra) then turned to her master's house and began to fast constantly, praying through each night. During the day she remained on her feet, occupied with her household chores. One night her master awoke and, hearing a cry, stared over to see Hazrat Rabia (ra) awake with her forehead bowed to the floor in supplication:

"O God, You are aware that the sole longing of my heart is to be totally surrendered to your command. The very light of my eyes is service to Your court. If it were up to me, I would never cease serving you, even for an hour. Yet you have caused me to be subject to a creature. For this, I come late to your service."

As she was immersed in prayer, a divine light enveloped around her. After witnessing this incident, her master rose and pondered to himself, "Such a woman cannot be confined to slavery." In the

morning he summoned Hazrat Rabia (ra) and set her free, remarking, "If you remain with us, we shall all serve you; if you do not wish this to happen, go where you will." Hazrat Rabia (ra) asked for her leave and departed.

She subsequently devoted herself to various works of piety. Within every twenty-four hour period, she was said to perform a thousand rak'ahs of the ritual prayer. She made a cell of seclusion for herself and occupied herself solely with acts of devotion. In the end, she set out on the pilgrimage to Makkah and retired to the desert.

THE QUESTION OF MARRIAGE

While she received many marriage offers she refused them as she had no time in her life for anything other than Allah and so remained celibate. Muhammad ibn Sulayman Hashimi, the Governor of Baghdad, whose properties produced an income of eight thousand dirhams each day, once wrote to the nobles of Basra, requesting them to find him a suitable wife. They sought out Hazrat Rabia (ra) as a possible candidate. In answer to his request, Hazrat Rabia (ra) wrote to the Amir:

"Just as abstinence (Zuhd) in this world is a source of bodily comfort, likewise attention to the world results in worry and grief. Lay aside your excess wealth, dedicate your riches here to the life hereafter. Be trustee of your own soul now; do not let men administer and divide your wealth later on. Fast from life; let death break your fast. As for me, even if God were to place at my

disposal as much as you offer, or even much more, it would not be possible for me to heed ought beside Him for as much as the wink of an eye." "(Monawi, Tabaqat al-Awliya)"

It is reported that even the renowned Sufi saint Hazrat Hasan al-Basri (ra) asked for her hand in marriage to which she replied:

"The marriage contract is bound to a 'being.' But here 'being' is absent. Of myself I am unaware; alone through Him I am, and under the shadow of His will I exist. My husband must be sought from Him."

"How did you attain to this station?" questioned Hazrat Hasan (ra).

"Through losing all my attainment in Him." she replied.

"How do you know Him, then?" Hazrat Hasan (ra) inquired.

You know 'how', she answered. I know without 'how'.

When asked by the people why she didn't marry, she said:

"I have been left bewildered by worry over three things. If you free me from having to worry about them, I will marry. First of all, at the moment of death, shall my faith be sufficient to bring me to salvation? Second, will the book of my deeds be given to

me in my left or right hand? Third, upon that hour when a party of people are called forth on the left hand to Hell, and another group from the right hand are summoned to Heaven, which company will I belong to?"

"Of this, we are ignorant," they informed her. "With this anxiety that afflicts me then," she replied, "how can I ever marry?"
Shaikh Shu'aib ibn Abdul-Aziz al-Horayfaysh in his book al-Rowdh al-Fa'iq, has added a fourth question to Hazrat Farid al-Din Attar's (ra) account of this story: "When I am interrogated in the grave by the two angels of death, Munkar and Nakir, shall I be able to answer their questions or not?"

HAZRAT RABIA'S (RA) DEVOUT WAY OF LIFE

Hazrat Rabia's (ra) nights were occupied in sleepless vigilance, and her days in the worship of God. It is said that she was deeply absorbed in grief and wept exceedingly.
The following account, attributed to Hazrat Rabia (ra) by 'Abda bint Abi Showal, a lady devoted to Hazrat Rabia's (ra) service, is related in the Sifat al-Safwat of Ibn al-Jawzi:

"Hazrat Rabia (ra) used to pray all night, only then permitting herself to doze lightly before dawn until the shadow of daybreak tinted the horizon. Then she would rise and say, possessed by deep fear, 'O soul, how long shall you go on with this sleeping and waking? The time is near when you will sleep so much that only the trumpet call of the Resurrection will summon you awake.' This was her way of life until she died, extremely eager to

maintain the night vigil unless some task arose that kept her from it."

In the same work, Ibn al-Jawzi narrates Abdullah ibn Isa's account of his meeting with Hazrat Rabia (ra):

"When I entered Hazrat Rabia's (ra) house, I perceived her face radiant with a brilliant sheen from her constant crying. A man sat near her, reciting a verse from the Koran concerning Hellfire, whereupon she burst out in tears, then she cried out and fainted.

Another time she was seated on a mat of woven reeds when we entered her presence. A man near to her was lecturing on some matter while her tears poured like rain onto the torn reed-mat. In sudden agitation she cried out. Then we all arose and took our leave."

Abd al-Ra'uf Monawi in the Tabaqat al-Awliya (Classes of the Saints) has also noted that Hazrat Rabia (ra) was "extremely fearful."
Hasan al-Basri (ra) gives the following account of her nature:

"In her whole house I saw only a pitcher with a chip on its spout, which she used to perform ablutions as well as drink water, a brick which she used as a pillow, and a mat of woven reeds on which she prayed. Besides this, there was nothing else. Whatever people bestowed on her she rejected, saying, 'I have no need of the world."

Monawi writes in the Tabaqat al-Awliya that "Hazrat Rabia (ra) felt so ashamed before God that for forty years she never raised her head to heaven."

Hazrat Malik ibn Dinar (ra) has described Hazrat Rabia (ra)'s life-style as follows:

"I visited the saint. She possessed a pitcher with a crack in it which she employed both for ablutions and drinking; instead of a pillow, she used a brick. There was also an old straw mat. My heart was anguished at the sight, and I pleaded with her, 'I have wealthy friends; only indicate it and I'll see that they regard you favourably.' 'You are wrong Malik,' she replied, 'my Provider is their Provider too, isn't He?' 'Of course,' I replied. 'Do you imagine,' she rejoined, that He has forgotten the poor because of their poverty, while assisting the rich because they are wealthy?' 'No,' I answered. 'Since He is aware of my state then,' she went on, 'what need is there to remind Him? If this is how He likes it, my, wish is one with His.'

Describing an overnight visit with Hazrat Rabia (ra), Hazrat Sufyan al-Thawri (ra) has written:

"I saw her enter her mihrab and occupy herself in prayers until daybreak. In the opposite corner of the house I also performed prayer till dawn. With the sunrise, she suggested we dedicate the rest of the day to fasting to express our gratitude for the grace through which we maintained the night vigil."

It is related that Hazrat Rabia (ra) was engaged in continual wailing and lamentation. “For what are you weeping?” she was questioned. She confessed:

“My deepest fear is separation, for I have become accustomed to Him. Is it not possible that at the time of death a voice will come saying, ‘You are not worthy of Me?’”

She also said:

“Deep within my breast lies the reason for my bereavement and pain. This ailment no doctor can remedy. The sole cure of this pain is Union with the Friend, and by mourning I hope that perhaps hereafter I will reach what I seek. Though I was not originally conceived in that Divine Grief, I attempt to simulate the state of those who are truly afflicted with Divine Love, that I may be deemed no less than they.”

OLD AGE

Ibn al-Jawzi, in the Sifat al-Safwat, relates the following story from Muhammad ibn Amr:

“When I entered Hazrat Rabia (ra)’s presence, she was an aged woman of eighty years, brittle as dried skin. It seemed that if you touched her she would crumble to pieces. In her house I saw only a split reed-mat and a clothes stand of Persian reed, which was two meters wide. The covering of her house was of plain

branches. There was also a water pitcher and a bit of sheep's wool beside her bed and place of prayer. Next to these was a reed-mat on which she had placed her shroud. Whenever death was mentioned, she would tremble, visibly possessed by shivering. It is related that a pool of water from her tears lay gathered beside the place where she prostrated during prayers."

In his Tazkirat al-Awliyā, Hazrat Farid al-Din Attar (ra) writes of Hazrat Rabia's (ra) spiritual magnanimity:

"Concerning Hazrat Rabia's (ra) death, great Sufi masters all averred: 'Hazrat Rabia (ra) came into the world and went unto the hereafter; she never exalted or vaunted herself before God, never wanted anything, never saying, 'Do so much for me' or 'Provide me with this.'"

PASSING ON

DATE

There is no unanimity among scholars concerning the date of Hazrat Rabia' (ra) death. Various historians offer differing accounts. The date 135 AH/753 AD is cited by Ibn al-Jawzi in the Shodhur al-'Oqud, Abu al-Mahasen Taghriberdi in the Al-Nojum al-Zahera, Mortadha Zobaydi in the Ittehaf al-Sadat al-Amottaqin, ibn al- Molqan in the Tabaqat al-Awliya, and ibn 'Emad Hanbali in the Shadharat al-Dhahab. According to Dhahabi and Abdur-Ra'uf Monawi in the Tabaqat al-Awliya,

Hazrat Rabia (ra) passed away in 180 AH/ 796 AD. Ibn Khallekan and ibn Shaker al Kotobi in their biographical histories, and 'Emad al-Din Abol-Fada' Isma'il ibn 'Omar ibn Kathir al-Quraishi al-Demashqi (d.1373) in his book al-Bedayah wal-Nahaya, put her death date as 185 AH/801 AD. The latter is also cited for Hazrat Rabia's (ra) death by Dara Shokuh in the Safinat al-Awliya.

FINAL MOMENTS

Ibn al-Jawzi, in the Sifat al-Safwat relates that at the time of her death, Hazrat Rabia (ra) summoned 'Abda bint Abi Showal into her presence and gave an order that none be informed of her death. She requested that she be shrouded only in an old gown (jubbah) for burial. Her servant faithfully complied with her request and clothed her corpse only in that gown, covered by the woolen cloak that was her normal garb. In *Tazkirat al-Awliyā*, Hazrat Farid al-Din Attar (ra) writes of Hazrat Rabia's (ra) passing on (ra): During Hazrat Rabia's (ra) last hours, the masters of her age gathered around her deathbed. She commanded, "Rise and make way for the prophets of God." Rising, they left the room and shut the door. A voice was then heard declaring:

Yusuf Ali: O soul who is at rest, return to thy Lord, well-pleased (with Him), well-pleasing (Him). So enter among My servants, and enter My garden.

Qur'an Text/Transliteration 89:27

Nothing else was heard. The Shaykhs then entered and found that she had passed on.

INCIDENTS AFTER HER DEMISE

Hazrat Farid al-Din Attar (ra) relates that after her death, Hazrat Rabia (ra) appeared in a certain person's dream. "Tell us of Munkar and Nakir, the two angels of death," the person begged. "Those two noble beings appeared to me," she related, and asked, 'Who is your Lord?'" I said:

"Return and tell God… among so many thousands of people, You did not forget an old woman, and so, since I could never forget You who are all I have in the whole world, how then could You send someone to ask, Who is your Lord?"

Ibn al-Jawzi, in the Sifat al-Safwat relates that about a year after Hazrat Rabia's (ra) death, 'Abda bint Abi Showal, a pious lady in Hazrat Rabia's (ra) service, dreamt of her. Hazrat Rabia (ra) appeared attired in a green silken gown embroidered with gold and silver. 'Abda had never before beheld anyone more beautiful. "What happened to the old gown and woolen cloak that we buried you in?" the girl asked. Hazrat Rabia (ra) answered:

"I swear by God, those garments were taken away from me, and then I was garbed in that which you see now, while my former shroud was folded, sealed and borne aloft to a sublime spot so that my reward would be perfect on the Day of Resurrection."

"Was this the reason for all your spiritual combat (Mujahida) during your days on earth?" asked 'Abda. Hazrat Rabia (ra) answered, "What is even this compared to what I have seen of God's generosity to His friends."

"Whatever became of 'Abda, Abu Kalab's daughter?" 'Abda inquired.

"Ah, far, far beyond me is the station she attained," Hazrat Rabia (ra) responded, "Never shall I approach her." 'Abdah pressed, "But how is this, since your spiritual state was higher than hers?" Hazrat Rabia (ra) rejoined, "Because she did not concern herself with how she passed her days and nights."

"And of Abu Malek Zaygam," 'Abda continued, "whatever became of him?" Hazrat Rabia (ra) replied, "He makes pilgrimage to God, the Exalted, whenever he wishes." 'Abdah further inquired concerning Bashir ibn Mansur.

"His state is happy," answered Hazrat Rabia (ra), "for God has bestowed upon him more than he ever aspired to."

'Abda in the end requested Hazrat Rabia (ra), "Provide me with some admonition so I may draw closer to God." Hazrat Rabia (ra) counseled her, "Devote yourself totally to the remembrance of God, for only this shall cheer you in the grave."

On another occasion, Muhammad ibn Aslam al-Tusi (ra) and Na'mi Tartusi (ra), who were known to have provided water for thirty thousand people in the desert, once visited Hazrat Rabia's (ra) grave. They asked, "O you who boasted you would never lower your brow before anyone in the two worlds, how are you now?" They were answered by a voice saying, 'How sweet indeed was what I saw!'"

QUOTES

1. O my Lord! If I worship Thee on account of the fear of Hell, burn me in Hell, and if I worship Thee with the hope of Paradise, exclude me from it, but if I worship Thee for Thine own sake, then withhold not from me Thine Eternal Beauty.

2. I have not served God for fear of Hell, for I should be like a wretched hireling, if I did it for fear; nor for love of Paradise, for I should be a bad servant if I served for the sake of what was given, but I have served Him only for the love of Him and out of desire for Him.

3. Repentance is attained by the saints with the Divine grace and it comes from the side of God who enlightens the hearts of those whom He loves. Seeking a formal forgiveness is the sin for lying. If I seek repentance of myself, I shall have need of repentance again.

4. Seclusion is the soul's ideal preparation for reaching God. It is in the state of solitude that the soul contemplates on the attributes of God.

5. The soul comes from God and it can be united with Him if it is purified through the process of mortification.

6. When asked about some worldly thing she wanted to have, she replied: “I am ashamed to ask for a thing of this world from Him to whom this world belongs; how can I ask for it from those to whom it does not belong.

7. She asked in her private prayer, “O my Lord, will you burn in the Fire a heart that holds love for you?” The caller answered; “We will never do such a thing. Do not think so poorly of Us.”

8. One day she fell sick. When asked about the reason for her illness, she said, “At dawn my heart inclined fondly toward paradise. By way of this sickness, I have been rebuked by the Friend. This is the cause of my sickness. “

9. Hazrat Rabia (ra) once was asked, “When does a slave acquire contentment?” She replied, “When he or she is as grateful for adversity as for bounty.”

10. None of the matter of this world or of the next should deter you from Allah. Rabia said, “While I am in this world, all I want from this world is to remember You, and my only wish for the hereafter is to be able to see You. Other than this, do with me as You wish.

11. As long as man’s heart is not alert, his other limbs cannot find the path of Allah. An alert heart is a heart lost in divine absorption. Such a heart is not in need of the aid of other limbs. This stage is called Fana (annihilation).

12. The best thing for a servant who desires to be near his Lord, is to possess nothing in this world or the next save Him.

13. I have served my God only for the love of Him and out of des ire for.

14. My peace is in solitude but my beloved (God) is always with me. Nothing can take the place of His love and it is test for me amongst the mortal beings.

15. Oh Lord: The Stars are shining and the eyes of man are closed and kings have shut their doors and every lover is alone with his beloved and here am I alone with Thee.

16. What He (God) wills, we should also will.

17. Two ways I love Thee: selfishly and next, as worthy of Thee. This selfish love that I do naught Save think of Thee with every thought.

18. There are three kinds of men: The first believes that his hands and his sons' hands are all that is necessary to succeed in the only world they know-the material world. The second kind prays with his hands so that a reward will be earned in the next life. The third kind has his hands tied at the wrist, bound with love to serve without thought of return.

19. O God, whatsoever You have apportioned to me of worldly things, Give that to Your enemies, And what You have apportioned to me in the Hereafter, Give that to Your Friends, For You suffice me.

20. Asking for forgiveness out loud is the work of hypocrites. Though we repent, we need still another repentance to repent of repenting.

21. If the virtue of patience were a man, he would be of a generous disposition.

22. The fruit of gnosis is to turn one's face towards God, the Almighty.

23. The Gnostic is someone who seeks a heart from God. Once this is granted to him, however, he immediately renders it back to God, such that it remains secure in His tenure and is shrouded from human access in Divinity's mystery (Sirr).

24. Love (Muhabbat) has come from pre- eternity (Azal), passed unto post-eternity (Abad) and perceived no one among the eighteen worlds competent to drink even a gulp of its sherbet. When at last Love reached the Truth, only this adage remained: 'He Loves them and they Love Him'.

25. My love of the all-Merciful leaves me no room for hostility towards Satan.

26. O Children of Adam! Your eyes provide no passage to perceive the Truth, nor is there any access to Him by speech of the tongue. The faculty of hearing is but a highway to distress for the speaker, while your hands and feet only steer you only into bewilderment. The true work is in the heart. Try to acquire an awakened heart, for when the heart is awakened, it will have no need of a friend. That is to say, an awakened heart is one which is lost in God. What need does one who is effaced and lost in God have of a friend; for this is the station of Annihilation in God. (Fana fi'llah)

27. Hazrat Rabia (ra) was once asked, "Do you actually see Him whom you worship?" She replied, "I would not worship Him unless I saw Him."

28. I grieve not because I am sorrowful; I am aggrieved at my own lack of sorrow.

29. Indeed your days are numbered, for when one day passes, a significant portion of your life has passed away. And when that portion has fled, soon it will come to pass that your whole life has disappeared. As you know this, strive always towards the performance of good deeds.

30. Even if the entire world belonged to one man, he would not be rich for the world passes away.

31. I am not after any reward for my good works, but only that on the Day of Judgment the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ should say to the rest of the Prophets: 'Behold this woman of my community; this was her work.'

32. All people are afraid of the reckoning of the Day of Judgment, whereas I long for it. At last God will address me as 'O, My servant!'

33. How many passions are there, O God, whose delights perish, while only an evil after-effect remains. O Lord, shall Your sole retribution also be bad? Do You hold no other punishment besides fire?

34. Neither fear of Hellfire nor hope of a Heavenly reward excites my love and worship of God. If either were so, I would only be a bad employee working from fear of punishment or hope of benefit. My longing and love, rather, is the sole basis of my devotion to Him.

35. The lover of God will cry and weep until he finds rest in the Beloved's embrace.

36. Conceal your good qualities as much as you conceal your bad qualities.

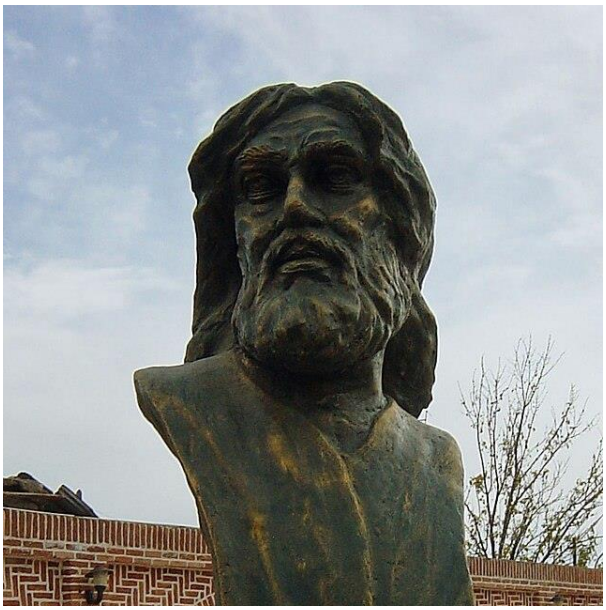
37. O Creator, I forgive everyone who has oppressed me for Your sake. Request whoever I have oppressed to forgive me.

38. No separation exists between the Beloved and the lover.

39. Death is a bridge between friends. The time now nears that I cross that bridge, and friend meets Friend.

40. Were the rapture of Divine Love which I have realized ever to be bestowed upon humankind, no one would remain unaffected by this love.

Hazrat Shams Tabrizi



Madhab: Shafi'i

Born: 1180s AD Tabriz (present-day Iran)

Passed away: 1248 AD or later

Resting place: Disputed

Shams al-Din Mohammad bin Ali bin Malik-e Dad or Shams al-Din Tabrizi (meaning "the Sun of Faith from Tabriz") was a Persian Sufi saint who is best known for his intense spiritual relationship with Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi. He is credited for wholly transforming Mawlana Rumi's life and thought after arriving in Konya in 642/1244.

Hazrat Shams left a single work in prose known as Maqalat (Discourses) which reveal him to be highly proficient

in philosophy, theology and spirituality. He was an engaging speaker whose words were both simple and profoundly moving.

EARLY LIFE & FAMILY

Hazrat Shams was born at some point in the 1180s in Tabriz (present-day Iran). Tabriz was popular among Sufis and many great Sufi saints such as Hazrat Ahmad Ghazali, Hazrat Najmuddin Kubra and Abu Najib al-Suhrawardi had spent some time there. During his early years, it is said that a group of seventy saints were living in Tabriz.

From a young age, he was gifted with spiritual abilities which his parents could not comprehend.

His father was said to be a good man of generous nature, although he was not on the spiritual path and thus Hazrat Shams was unable to reveal his mystic visions to him. This resulted Hazrat Shams feeling estranged from his father and others because he could not explain his spiritual sensibilities to those around him. He says in his Maqalat:

"My father didn't understand me at all. I was a stranger in my own town. My father was a stranger to me and my heart recoiled from him. I thought he might fall upon me. He'd speak kindly to me, but I thought he'd beat me and expel me from the house." (Maqalat 740)

When his father would tell him that he didn't understand his ways, Hazrat Shams would answer by telling him that they were not "cut of the same cloth".

For about thirty or forty days just before he reached adolescence, his progress on the spiritual path made him averse to food, and he would hide food in his sleeve whenever it was offered to him.

EDUCATION

Hazrat Shams was a Shafi'i and he studied Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence) extensively. One of the five major Shafi'i legal texts he specifically mentions he studied was al-Tanbih fil fiqh al-Shafi'i, written by Hazrat Abu Ishaq al-Shirazi (d. 1083), one of the leading Shafi'i jurisprudents of the eleventh century and one of the first teachers of the famous Baghdad Nizamiya College.

He always supported the scholarly study of religion and he did not like the pretense of those who prided themselves solely on the spiritual path:

"At first I wouldn't mix with jurists, only with the dervishes. I'd say that the jurists are ignorant of dervish-hood. Now that I have realized what dervish-hood is and where they are, I find myself more eager for the company of jurists than dervishes, because the jurists have struggled to attain something. These others boast that we are dervishes. But where is the true dervish?" (Maqalat 249)

He was thus very educated, although he hid this fact from religious scholars to an extent that his peers were confused about

whether he considered himself to be a Faqih (scholar of the law) or a Faqir (Sufi ascetic). He says:

"Someone asked my friend about me, "Is he a Faqih or a Faqir?"

"Both Faqih and Faqir," he replied.

He asked, "Then why do all speak of his Fiqh?"

He answered, "For his poverty is of such a nature that it cannot be spoken about with that group… he speaks beyond the boundaries of knowledge and speaks of mysteries in a knowledgeable way in the cloak of knowledge." (Maqalat 326)

Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi described Hazrat Shams as being unrivaled in his knowledge of alchemy, astronomy, astrology, logic, theology and philosophy, although he kept this fact hidden in the company of religious people. Hazrat Sultan Walad, Mawlana Jalauddin Rumi's son, describes him as "a man of learning and wisdom and eloquence and composition".

SPIRITUAL TEACHER & ORDER

During his childhood, Hazrat Shams had a passionate spiritual master, Hazrat Sheikh Abu Bakr Sallebaf (Sallebaf literally means "Wicker-Worker") of Tabriz also known as Pir-e Sallebaf, who would often twirl him around in meditative dance (Sama'). Hazrat Sheikh Sallebaf had his own Sufi lodge in the Charandab district of Tabriz, to the west of the shrine of Imam Hafade (d. 1175). Unlike the customs of most Sufi Tariqas, Hazrat Sallebaf

did not bestow the honorary cloak (Khirqa) on his disciples to symbolise initiation into a Sufi order.

Instead, Hazrat Shams was bestowed the cloak not through a teacher but by the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself:

"Everyone talks of his own sheikh. In a dream the Prophet, peace upon him, gave me a ceremonial cloak (Khirqa), not the kind that will wear out and rip after a few days and fall in the bath house and be washed of dirt, but a cloak of converse (Sohbat), not a converse that can be comprehended, but a converse that is not of yesterday, today or tomorrow." (Maqalat 326)

He could therefore be described as an Uwaisi Sufi, named after the great saint Hazrat Uwais al-Qarni, who despite never meeting the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ physically was fully aware of his spiritual presence at all times during his life.

After training with Hazrat Sallebaf for some time, he quickly excelled and wanted to gain greater perfection and so went on a journey to seek out saints and holy men (Abdal wa Aqtab).

JOURNEY

After leaving Tabriz, Hazrat Shams traveled through various places including Baghdad, Damascus, Aleppo, Kayseri, Aksaray, Sivas, Erzurum and Erzincan.

He travelled hidden from the people, constantly striving to guard his miracles and mysteries. Rather than boarding in Sufi lodges, which would provide free hospitality, Hazrat Shams acted and

dressed like merchants and would thus stay in inns, which he would have to pay for. In every inn that he stayed, he would put a huge lock on his door, although within the room itself there was nothing but a straw mat.

Even though he ate very little and often went without food for several days, he still needed a source of income to cover his expenses during his travels. Therefore, he would teach children how to read the Quran and even developed a method for teaching the whole Quran in a mere three months.

When he did not stay very long in one place, he would earn money by weaving trouser ties. Whilst in Erzincan, he tried to construction work, like he had done in his youth, but due to his simple eating habits and perceived frailty, nobody would hire him. Hazrat Shams, like many Sufis, thus seemed very opposed to the practice of begging.

HAZRAT SHAMS' QUEST

Hazrat Shams spent much of his life traveling from place to place and listening to lectures of famous teachers, most of whom he found disappointing in one respect or another. Regarding the Sufis he had met during his journey, he says:

"I've seen many special dervishes and spent time in their company; through what they say and through their behavior, the true ones are distinguishable from the impostors. My meek heart will not incline to them unless they are extremely praiseworthy and special, nor will this bird peck at every seed."

He longed to find that saintly and spiritual companion that he was looking for during his journey. He writes:

"I implored God to allow me to mix with and be a companion of His friends (Awliya-ye khwod). I had a dream and was told, "We will make you a companion of a saint." I asked, "Where is this saint?" The next night I was told in a dream, "He is in Anatolia (Rum)." After a while, I had another dream and was told, "It's not yet time. All things come in the fullness of time." (Maqalat 759-60)

Elsewhere, he states:

"I can talk to myself. I can talk with anyone in whom I see myself…" (Maqalat 99)

"I wanted someone of my own type to make into my Qibla [the direction one faces in prayer] and turn to, for I had grown tired of myself. Do you understand what I mean by having grown tired of myself? Then, having turned into a Qibla, he would understand and comprehend what I am saying." (Maqalat 219-20)

MEETING WITH MAWLANA JALALUDDIN RUMI

On November 29 1244, Hazrat Shams arrived in Konya. According to Mevlevi tradition, he was over sixty years old when he arrived in the town. Upon arriving, he stayed at an inn and it was outside the inn, at a little shop or pavilion, where he met

Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi. This area was often a meeting point for the notables of the city at the time.

Accounts differ as to exactly what happened at this first meeting between the two, but it was a life-changing experience for Mawlana Rumi. The most frequently repeated account of what happened is related by Ahmed Aflaki in Manaqib al-'Arifin:

"One day, as he [Shams] was seated at the gate of an inn, Rumi came by, riding on a mule, in the midst of a crowd of students and disciples on foot. Shams arose, advanced and took hold of the mule's bridle, addressing Rumi in these words, 'Exchanger of the current coins of deep meaning, who knows the Names of God! Tell me, was Muhammad ﷺ the greater servant of God, or Bayazid Bistami?'

Rumi answered him, 'Muhammad ﷺ was incomparably the greater – the greatest of all prophets and saints.'

'Then,' rejoined Shams, 'how is it that Muhammad ﷺ said, "We have not known Thee, O God, as Thou ought to be

known," whereas Bayazid said, "Glory unto me! How great is my glory."?'

On hearing this question, Rumi fainted. On regaining his senses, he took the questioner to his home."

An exchange ensued between the two men, with Mawlana Rumi finally saying that Hazrat Bayazid's spiritual thirst was quenched after one drink, he spoke of being full and so he stopped seeking. However, the Prophet's ﷺ thirst was never quenched and he went

on seeking, aspiring to be drawn closer to the Divine. It was for this reason that he said, 'We have not known Thee as Thou ought to be known.' Hearing this, it was Hazrat Shams that fainted.

This account is supported by Hazrat Shams in his own writings who says:

"The first thing I spoke about with him was this: How is it that Aba Yazid did not need to follow [the example of the Prophet], and did not say "Glory be to Thee" or "We worship Thee?"

And Rumi completely understood the full implications of the problem and where it came from and where it was leading to. It made him ecstatic on account of his purity of spirit, for his spirit was pure and cleansed and it shone within him. I realised the sweetness of this question from his ecstasy, though I had been previously unaware of its sweetness." (Maqalat 685)

This account is the most reliable of the meeting between the two although other perhaps less accurate accounts are given. Hazrat Muhiyuddin Abdul Qadir ibn Abi al-Wafa al-Qurayshi (d.1373) gives one account of the meeting:

"Rumi was sitting in his library with some books and his pupils gathered around him. Shams came along, greeted them, sat down and gesturing toward the books, asked: "What are these?"

Rumi replied, "You wouldn't know." Before Rumi finished speaking, the books and the library caught on fire.

"What's this?" cried Rumi. Shams retorted, "You wouldn't know either," and got up and left.

Rumi got up, leaving his position and family behind, and followed after him, captivated and extemporizing poems, from city to city, but never caught up with him again."

Others such as the great Sufi Hazrat Abdur Rehman Jami tell a slightly different version of this encounter, where water is substituted for fire:

"Rumi was sitting near a garden pool with a few books when Shams arrived and asked, "What's this?"
Rumi replied, "These are called debates, but you needn't bother with them."
Shams touched them and threw them in the water. Rumi got upset at the ruin of these rare and precious books. Shams reached in the water and retrieved them one by one. Rumi saw that there was no trace of water damage on them.
"What secret is this?" he asked. Shams replied, "This is spiritual inclination and entrancement, what would you know of it?"

FIRST MEETING

In his discourses, Hazrat Shams alludes to the fact that he had briefly encountered Mawlana Rumi 16 years prior to their meeting in Konya, perhaps during a lecture or debate:

"I don't mix much with anyone. Even with one so great (Sadr) that though you sift the whole world you won't find another like him, sixteen years passed during which I said only "hello" and he

left. (Maqalat 290)

The outward aspects vary, but the reality is one. I remember about Mawlana from sixteen years ago – he would say that creatures are just like clusters of grapes. The individual numbers are the outward aspect. When you squeeze them in a bowl, are there individual grapes?" (Maqalat 690)

He indicates that although he perceived a special quality in Mawlana Rumi at their first encounter, he felt he had not yet reached a level of spiritual maturity which would allow him to receive Hazrat Shams favourably. After waiting for 16 years, he felt it was his mission to release Mawlana Rumi in order to unlock his spiritual greatness. He tells Mawlana:

"I was strongly inclined to you from the beginning, but I saw in the opening of your speech that at that time you were not ready for this secret. Even if I had told you, it would not have been destined at that time, and we would never have attained this present moment together, for at that time you didn't have this spiritual state."

(Maqalat 618-619)

"They have sent me because that precious servant is caught in the company of crude people; it's a pity that they should squander him."

(Maqalat 622)

Ahmed Aflaki in Manaqib al-'Arifin mentions that the brief encounter between the two took place in the square of Damascus, whilst Mawlana Rumi was a student there.

RELATIONSHIP WITH MAWLANA

Hazrat Shams' relationship with Mawlana was unique in a sense it wasn't the traditional master-disciple kind of relationship. Mawlana was already an accomplished scholar and teacher in his own right, with a following of his own. Hazrat Shams talks about his apparent unwillingness or dilemma to behave in the manner of a Shaykh in his writings:

"You know I have never acted shaykh-like, unmindful of your station, and said "I'm going here whether you like it or not and if you are mine, you'll come with me." No, I do not demand whatever is difficult for you." (Maqalat 761)

"I need it to be apparent how our life together is going to be. Is it brotherhood and friendship or shaykh-hood and discipleship? I don't like this. Teacher to pupil?" (Maqalat 686)

"I first came to Mawlana with the understanding that I would not be his shaykh. God has not yet brought into being on this earth one who could be Mawlana's shaykh; he would not be a mortal. But nor am I one to be a disciple. It's no longer in me. Now I come for friendship, relief. It must be such that I do not need to dissimulate (Nefaq). Most of the prophets have dissimulated.

Dissimulation is expressing something contrary to what is in your heart." (Maqalat 777)

Despite his reluctance to act in the manner of shaykh, Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi reserved great respect for him, as a student would show a teacher:

"In my presence, as he listens to me, he considers himself – I am ashamed to even say it – like a two-year-old child or like a new convert to Islam who knows nothing about it. Amazing submissiveness!" (Maqalat 730)

At times Mawlana would read the works of others for guidance and inspiration. However, Hazrat Shams told Mawlana that Tasawwuf (Sufism) must be practised rather than merely being studied – "You want to discover through learning; but it requires going and doing" (Maqalat 128).

Therefore, he saw extensive knowledge as perhaps an impediment on the spiritual path:

"This multi-talented scholar, well-versed in fiqh and the principles and details of the law! These have no relationship to the path of God and the path of the Prophets. Rather, they cloak him from it". (Maqalat 361)

He thus initiated a spiritual transformation in Mawlana Rumi. He reports Mawlana as saying: "Since I have become acquainted with you these books have become lifeless in my eyes." (Maqalat *186*)

Hazrat Shams was himself overwhelmed in the presence of Mawlana:

"Seeing your face, by God, is a blessing!…Happy the one who finds Mawlana! Who am I? One who found him. Happy am I!" (Maqalat 749)

"By God, I am deficient in knowing Mawlana. There is no hypocrisy or politesse or interpretation in these words; I am deficient in knowing him! Every day I realize something about his state and his deeds which I didn't know yesterday. Discover Mawlana better, so you do not later grow confused…" (Maqalat 104)

Maulana Rumi is the envy of the saints and prophets, according to Hazrat Shams:

"He has two ways of talking (Sokhan): one public [Nafaq: cautious, dissimulation] and one heartfelt (Rasti). As for the public one, the souls of all the saints and their collective spirit long to have found Maulana and sat with him. And as for the heartfelt one, devoid of hypocrisy (Nifaq), the spirit of the prophets long for it: "If only we had been in his time and been his companions and heard his words!" So don't you miss out now. Don't look to the first, but to this other thing, to which the spirit

of the prophets looks with longing and regret." (Maqalat 104-5)

"The prophets rue not attaining his presence." (Maqalat 749)

INFLUENCE ON MAWLANA

Hazrat Shams and Maulana Rumi were inseparable and it is said that the two spent days, even months, together in a state of mystical communion. One biographer describes Mawlana's spiritual transformation at the hands of Hazrat Shams:

"The encounter with Shams triggered the completion of a paradigm shift in Rumi's approach to piety and spirituality; he discovered that beyond the safe, dry and socially approved forms of obedience (prayer, sermonizing, discovering and applying the principles of law) and renunciation (fasting, controlling the passions and the ego), there is a meta-spirituality of love, which consists in joyously and creatively celebrating our relationship with God."

SAMA'

It was under the direction of Hazrat Shams that Mawlana Rumi participated in Sama', the whirling meditation, for the first time. Hazrat Shams explains that for most people, according to Shariah, Sama' is forbidden as it serves to increase the passion and lust for those individuals. However, for those seeking Divine Love, it is permissible since it increases their focus on God.

By following his example, Mawlana thus made Sama' his own custom and practice. Hazrat Sultan Walad, Mawlana's son, describes this in his writings (in his Intihanama):

"Sama' became his creed both true and straight

from Sama' a hundred flowers filled his heart"

Hazrat Sultan Walad looked back on his father's transformation through this poem:

"Through love, a fatwa-writing Shaykh turned poet

though ascetic, he grew intoxicate

but not from a wine which is made of grapes –

a spirit of light drinks only wine of light." (Ebtedanama 53)

Hazrat Shams therefore freed Mawlana from conforming to a traditional role as an Islamic scholar.

HAZRAT SHAMS LEAVES FOR SYRIA

The sudden and total disappearance of Mawlana aroused resentment among his disciples and students, some of them becoming highly critical of Hazrat Shams, even threatening him. They believed Hazrat Shams had ruined their spiritual circle and prevented them from listening to Mawlana's sermons.

In March of 1246 he left Konya and went to Syria without warning. After he left, Mawlana was grief stricken, secluding himself even more rather than engaging with his disciples and students. He was without a doubt furious with them. Realising the error of their ways, they repeatedly repented before Mawlana.

Some months later, news arrived that Hazrat Shams had been seen in Damascus and a letter was sent to him with apologising for the behaviour of these disciples. Hazrat Sultan Walad and a search party were sent to Damascus to invite him back and in April 1247, he made his return. During the return journey, he invited Hazrat Sultan Walad to ride on horseback although he declined, choosing instead to walk alongside him, explaining that as a servant, he could not ride in the presence of such a king.

Hazrat Shams was received back with joyous celebration with Sama' ceremonies being held for several days, and all those that had shown him resentment tearfully asked for his forgiveness. He reserved special praise for Hazrat Sultan Walad for his selflessness, which greatly pleased Mawlana. As he originally had no intention to return to Konya, he most likely would not have returned if Hazrat Sultan Walad had not himself gone to Damascus in search of him. After his return, he and Mawlana Rumi returned to their intense discussions.

Referring to the disciples, Hazrat Shams narrates that their new found love for him was motivated only by desperation:

"They felt jealous because they supposed, "If he were not here, Mowlana would be happy with us." Now [that I am back] he belongs to all. They gave it a try and things got worse, and they

got no consolation from Mowlana. They lost even what they had, so that even the enmity (hava, against Shams) that had swirled in their heads disappeared. And now they are happy and they show me honor and pray for me." (Maqalat 72)

Referring to his absence, he explains that he left for the sake of Mawlana Rumi's development:

"I'd go away fifty times for your betterment. My going away is all for the sake of your development. Otherwise it makes no difference to me whether I'm in Anatolia or Syria, at the Kaaba or in Istanbul, except, of course, that separation matures and refines you." (Maqalat 164)

After a while, by the end of 1247, he was married to Kimia, a young woman who'd grown up in Mawlana Rumi's household. Sadly, Kimia did not live long after the marriage and passed away upon falling ill after a stroll in the garden.

HAZRAT SHAMS MYSTERIOUSLY DISAPPEARS

In late 1247 or early 1248, returning to their jealous ways, enmity from some disciples compelled him to depart again. In a conversation with Hazrat Sultan Walad, Hazrat Shams warned him that this time he would disappear into thin air:

""This time I'll disappear in such a way

that none will know to where I've gone or am

all will fail in their efforts to find me

never will they detect the slightest clue

many years will pass, me vanished in thin air

as I draw out the time, someone will claim

"Surely he was slain at some foe's hand."

This he repeated several times for emphasis." (Ebtedanama 52)

Soon after, he disappeared permanently. Mawlana Rumi was for a period of time deeply saddened and he cut off his association with all those disciples that had showed hostility towards Hazrat Shams. Later, he took a group of his closest disciples to Damascus in search of Hazrat Shams but unsuccessful in their quest, they eventually returned. A few years later, he undertook a second journey which again proved unfruitful.

Although nobody knows for certain what came of Hazrat Shams, Ahmed Aflaki in Manaqib al-'Arifin relates that he was murdered by disciples of Mawlana Rumi. However, even according to this account, there were no witnesses to his apparent death. Furthermore, neither his son Hazrat Sultan Walad, nor his disciple Hazrat Sepahsalar mentioned a murder in their works that are earlier than Aflaki's work. In addition, Mawlana Rumi traveled to Syria twice to look for him, so he certainly could not have believed he was murdered.

RESTING PLACE

Due to the fact he disappeared in mysterious circumstances, it is not known for certain where his resting place lies. According to Iranian scholar Mohammad-Ali Movahhed, he probably died in the city of Khoy (modern-day Iran) on his way to Tabriz shortly after leaving Konya. There is indeed a site in Khoy on the road from Konya to Tabriz, associated with the name of Shams-e Tabrizi that dates back to at least 1400.

QUOTES & SAYINGS

Blessing is excess, so to speak, an excess of everything. Don't be content with being a faqih, say I want more – more than being a Sufi, more than being a mystic – more than each thing that comes before you. (Maqalat 231)

Allahu akbar (God is great[er]) means that God is greater than that which you have imagined. It means don't stop there, come closer so that you see greatness. Seek so that you may find. (Maqalat 655)

Those sacrificial ones who long for death, searching it out just as poets search for rhyme, as the sick seek health, as prisoners their freedom and children Fridays. (Maqalat 159)

If you have the illumination and passion to desire death, congratulations and God's blessing upon you. Do not forget us in your prayers. And if you lack this light and passion, then strive and seek to attain it, for the Quran informs us that if you seek it

out, you will attain such a state. So seek. “Desire death if you are faithful and righteous.” Just as it is the righteous and faithful among men who seek out death, so it is the righteous and faithful among women. (Maqalat 87)

I am amazed at this Hadith: “The world is a prison to the believer.” I have seen no prison! I have seen only pleasure, I have seen only precious things, I have seen only fortune. (Maqalat 317)

Joy is like pure clear water; wherever it flows, wondrous blossoms grow…Sorrow is like a black flood; wherever it flows it wilts the blossoms. (Maqalat 195)

A good man complains of no one; he does not look to faults. (Maqalat 91)

My character is such that I pray for Jews. I say, God guide them. I pray for those who curse me: O God, occupy him with a better and more pleasing pursuit than cursing. (Maqalat 121)

What’s a shaykh? Being. What’s a disciple? Non-existence. Until a disciple ceases to exist, he is not a disciple. (Maqalat 739)

I have no business with the common folk of the world; I have not come for their sake. Those people who are guides for the world unto God, I put my finger on their pulse. (Maqalat 82)

الله جل جلاله